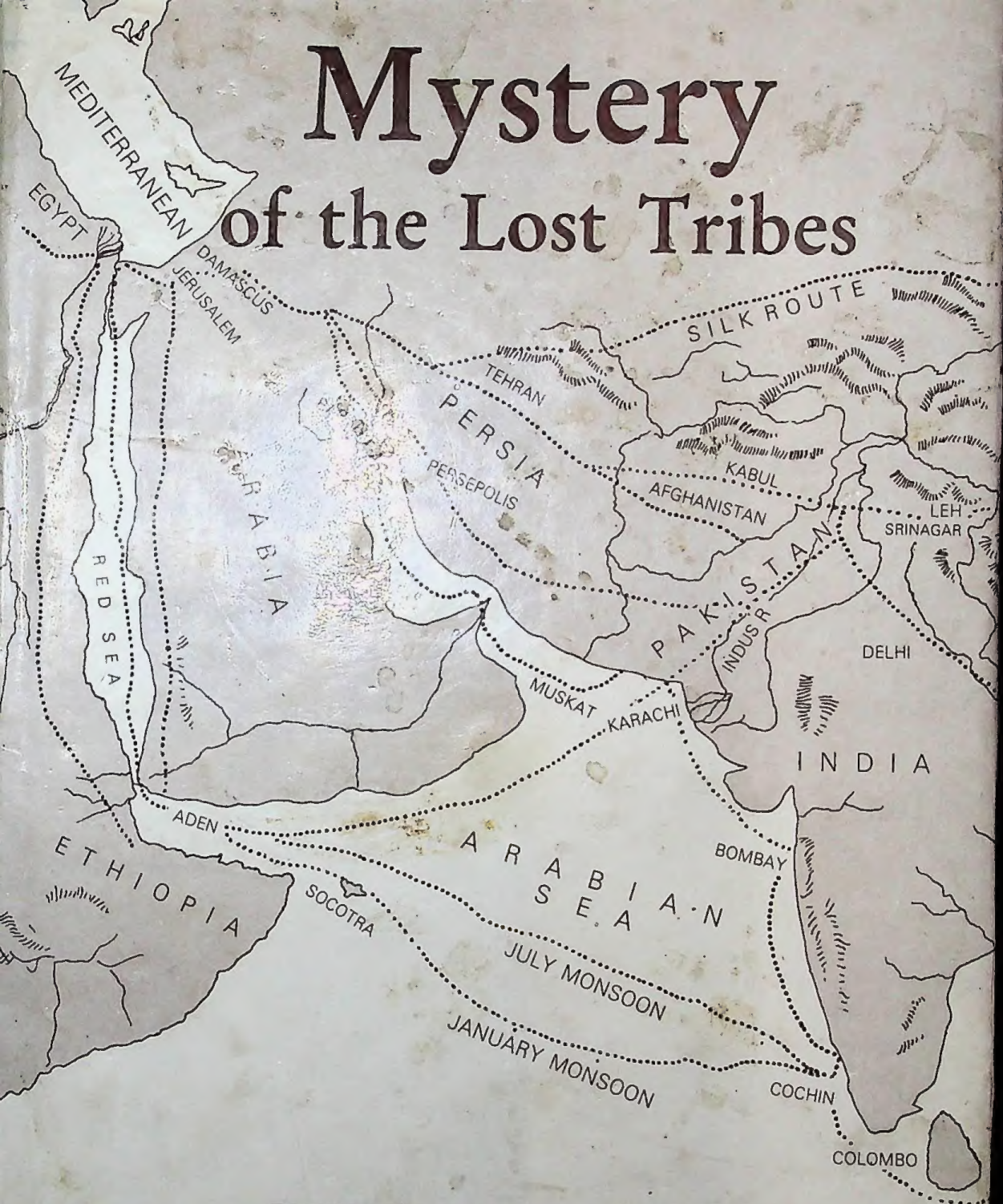




# Mystery of the Lost Tribes



YEHOSHUA BENJAMIN

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# MYSTERY OF THE LOST TRIBES



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**YEHOSHUA BENJAMIN  
NEW DELHI**

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## Author's Note

The dispersal of the lost ten tribes of the Hebrews into many nations nearly three thousand years ago is unique and has perhaps no parallel in history. Legends based in both fact and fiction, a few groups discovered in Kashmir and Manipur, and the sensational discovery of the Buddhist scrolls by Nicholas Notovitch excited my interest in probing further into the subject.

I did not consider it desirable to remain within the narrow confines of the Bible alone and wished to present the subject from a wider spectrum, recording excerpts from several books, ancient, modern and some apocryphal. Such a broad perspective has resulted in bringing together diverse fields of inquiry with tantalizing implications.

Without the active help of Prof. Fida Hassnain, ex-Director of Archaeology, Jammu and Kashmir and author of several books, this publication would not have been possible. He made his extensive library freely available for my use and even took the trouble to accompany me on some of my expeditions to unearth the facts. I am greatly indebted to him.

I would especially like to thank Zaafar Hasnain of Third World Publications for his personal involvement in all aspects of the project, including reading, copy-editing, typesetting and design.



DEDICATED  
TO  
the seekers of TRUTH.

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## Introduction

The mystery of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel dispersed and considered vanished nearly three thousand years ago has been baffling historians for centuries. Attempts have been made by scholars from time to time to piece together Biblical and historical records, documents in several languages and archaeological discoveries in various lands to trace their whereabouts. The dispersal of the *lost* tribes was viewed with great concern by Jews and many travellers came up with stories concerning the tribes they met in the most unbelievable circumstances.

About eighteen hundred years ago, a century after the destruction of the Second Temple, a historian who had travelled to India on a Roman ship, recorded that in one of the Indian ports he had discovered a small community of Jews who observed the Sabbath strictly and refused on that day to sell food to the Roman sailors. Several centuries later Moses Maimonides mentioned in one of his letters to the rabbis of Lunel in France that so far as he knew, there were Jews in India who observed the Sabbath and circumcised their males on the eighth day though they had no sacred books, not even the Torah, and thus had only the oral tradition to guide them.

It was perhaps on the basis of these reports reaching Europe, that medieval Jewery built up a number of stories about the Lost Tribes, living beyond the legendary fiery river Sambatyon.

The Falashas of Ethiopia and their extension to the tribe of Lemba in the Venda territory near South Africa, the Pathans of Afghanistan, settlements in Kashmir, Cochin, Manipur, Maharashtra and some in the Far East—China and Japan—show

links to the Lost Tribes of Israel. The Biblical prophecies continued to nourish the hope of some of these people in exile to return to their Land of Promise.

Dr. George Moore in his book *The Lost Tribes* (1861) says that remnants of the Lost Tribes were assimilated into diverse cultures such as the Christian Nestorians, the Irish, the Anglo-Saxons and the Saks (Scythians). He further claims that even Buddhism is of Israelitish origin. He gives translations in English and Hebrew of the inscription on the Buddhist stupa at Sanchi, Kanheri caves near Bombay and the Feroze Shah pillar in Delhi to prove his point. The Ten Commandments of Buddhism are almost identical to the Mosaic Commandments.

The Lost Tribes and the life of Jesus get closely linked to the Essene Brotherhood, a pre-Christian sect of Jewish monks who played a significant role in bringing up Jesus from his childhood to his survival on the Cross. The discovery of the ancient letter written by the leader of the Essene Brotherhood in Jerusalem to his counterpart in Alexandria just seven years after the Crucifixion narrates this eventful story.

Excerpts from a number of books throw light on this controversial subject. These include the apocryphal ancient book *The Acts of Judas Thomas*, Levy Dowling's *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*, and the Sanskrit books *Bhavishya Mahapurana* and *Raja-Tarangani*. Levy has transcribed in his book that Jesus when he was young was invited to India by a rich merchant prince of Orissa. In India Jesus preached the omnipotence of God and defined him as 'TRUTH'. Jesus' open criticism of the caste system angered the Brahmans and he had to flee to Nepal and thence back to Palestine. This is further corroborated by the sensational discovery of the Buddhist scrolls discovered by Nicholas Notovitch in 1887.



Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the book *Eternal India* has written that

“There is a legend that Christ visited Kashmir during the years when little is known of His whereabouts. Another claim is that He actually died near Srinagar where a tombstone with such an inscription was said to have been found.”

“The Jewish faith in Malabar has existed for nearly 2,000 years with never an incident of persecution or discrimination. The synagogue in Cochin celebrated its 400th anniversary some years ago.”

This mystery of the survival of Jesus on the Cross and his travel to India can be solved partly if the ‘Dark Treasury’ at the Hemis Monastery where the Buddhist scrolls seen by Nicholas Notovitch and Swami Abhedananda, is opened for the public and also the 63 manuscripts brought to Rome by missionaries from India, China, Egypt and Arabia, which it is mentioned are stored in the Vatican Library in Rome.

The Lost Tribes—black, brown and white—have made a considerable impact on mankind and the author hopes that the following pages will prove meaningful to those who wish to probe into this subject with an open and inquiring mind. It is hoped that this book will stimulate further research and the readers will try to throw light on the issues and find answers to the many queries raised in this book.



MAP SHOWING DIVISION OF CANAAN  
AMONG THE TRIBES

"AND THESE ARE THE INHERITANCES WHICH THE PEOPLE OF  
ISRAEL RECEIVED IN THE LAND OF CANAAN ..... THEIR  
INHERITANCE WAS BY LOT" ..... (JOSHUA 14:1-2)

## Historical Background

History narrates that the patriarch of the Hebrews, Abraham, lived nearly 4000 years ago—much before the dawn of western civilization—in the small strip of land of the Hebrews. He for the first time declared the God of mankind to be One and Omnipotent. His progeny produced three great religions. The Bible further gives the history of this race in a chronological order right from its founder, Abraham, to Isaac, Jacob and his twelve sons; thereafter, Moses the Law-Giver, who liberated the Hebrews from the slavery of the Pharaohs and brought them to the Promised Land in about 1220 BC. Moses bound the children of Israel into a nation and gave them their law, the Ten Commandments and the Torah—a manual of guidance. These Commandments ordained that God was One and stressed the sacredness of marriage, that every one had to work for six days and the seventh day was to be left for rest and thoughts of God.

### The Twelve Tribes of Israel

The twelve tribes comprised of Reuben, Shimon (Levi), Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Ephraim and Menasseh. These twelve tribes of Israel are descended from the sons and grandsons of Jacob (Gen. 29: 3; 35: 16-18; 48: 5-6). The tribes are collectively called Israel because of their origin in the patriarch Jacob (Israel).



The kingdom of Israel consisted of the ten tribes (the twelve tribes excluding the tribes of Judah and Benjamin who formed the southern kingdom of Judah) who were conquered by Shalmanesser, the king of Assyria, who deported them to Assyria and settled them in Halah and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and the cities of Media (II Kings 17: 3-6).

Joshua was given command of the people by Moses and the combined force of the twelve tribes was sufficient to conquer the Promised Land—Canaan. Joshua divided the land into lots and distributed it among the twelve tribes. Judah and Benjamin occupied the south and the remaining ten tribes got the northern and eastern bank of the river Jordan. After being governed by judges of whom Joshua was the first, the Israelites chose their first king, Saul.

History narrates that Saul was succeeded by King David, and thereafter his son, King Solomon, ascended the throne and built the great Holy Temple in Jerusalem. After the death of King Solomon in 930 BC, Rehoboam ascended the throne but was found to be very oppressive to his people. The kingdom was split up; Judah and Benjamin remaining loyal to Rehoboam. The other ten tribes formed the breakaway kingdom of Israel, its capital was Samaria and Jeroboam was its first king. There were constant raids from the barbaric neighboring kingdoms: the Amalekites, the Canaanites, Hivites, Moabites, Philistines, etc. The greatest weakness of the tribes was their internal disputes, quarrels and lack of unity in peace time. They would generally unite in a joint military effort against a strong enemy but as soon as the danger was over, they were indifferent to each other.

The fame of Jerusalem had spread far and wide attracting the evil eyes of wicked empires on the wealth of Jerusalem. After the death of King Solomon one invader after another plundered

Jerusalem. Shalmanesser, king of Assyria, and thereafter Tiglath Pilesser in 740 BC conquered Samaria and thus began the dispersal of the ten tribes.

Nebuchadnezzar plundered Jerusalem in 588 BC, burnt the Temple, put to the sword the priests and soldiers and carried away into captivity the warriors, artisans, craftsmen and all who would give vitality to his state of Babylon (II Kings 17: 3-6).

In addition to subjugating the enemy and carrying away his wealth, one of the objectives of wars those days was to create a large slave labor force and deport some to far-off lands to serve as outposts to guard and preserve captured territories. Several Mughal monuments in Delhi and Agra show the Shield of David prominently displayed on the main gateways of what can be considered to be the product of artisans of the Lost Tribes.

The tribes did not disappear—they are there “unto this day” and the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah (31: 8) and, above all, of Ezekiel kept alive the belief that the tribes had maintained a separate existence and that the time would come when they would be rejoined with their brethren in the Holy Land. This belief in the continued existence of the ten tribes was regarded as an incontrovertible fact during the whole period of the Second Temple and in the Talmud.

“On that day the Lord will make His power more glorious by recovering the remnant of His people, those who are still left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush and Elam, from Shinar, Hamath and the islands of the Sea.” (Isaiah 11: 11-12)

“When I bring them home out of the nations and gather them from the lands of their enemies, I will make them

an example of My holiness for many nations to see. They will know that I am the Lord their God because I who sent them into exile among the nations will bring them together again on the soil of their own land and leave none of them behind.” (Ezekiel 39: 27-28)

According to the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1978), the Jewish historian Josephus states as a fact that the “ten tribes are beyond the Euphrates till now.” It is further stated that the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (kingdom of Judah) were scattered throughout the world, “the ten tribes were exiled beyond the mysterious river Sambatyon with its rolling waters, sand and rocks.”

According to the Jerusalem Talmud, the exiles were divided into three groups. Only one third went beyond the river Sambatyon, a second group to “Daphne of Antioch, and over the third a cloud descended which covered them” but that all three groups would eventually return.

This is the history of the Hebrews in the Dark Ages. One would never imagine that in the recent past Nazi Germany with the civilization of Europe could set up the most barbaric machinery to destroy nearly one third of the world Jewish population—men, women and children, whose only fault was religion.

As already mentioned, travellers told stories concerning tribes they met in the most unbelievable circumstances. It is difficult to believe the authenticity of their discoveries in legend or fact, but all the same a few such stories are given here in brief.<sup>1</sup> The reader can draw his own conclusions with an open mind, based on the current knowledge of these dispersed people.

1. *A Treasury of Jewish Folklore* by Nathan Ausubel, New York: Crown Publisher, 1948.



**Benjamin of Tudela (Spain)**

Benjamin-Ben-Jonah of Spain travelled for 13 years through Greece, Asia and North Africa and returned to Spain in 1173. Benjamin has given in his diary a long description of the ten tribes. He states that he had seen in the town of Nishapur (Persia) the tribes of Dan, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali. These tribes were governed by their own Prince Joseph of Markala. He has also stated that the Jews of Khaibar are the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Menasseh.

**Eldad-Ha-Dani Meets Tribes**

Eldad-Ha-Dani of the tribe of Dan in the ninth century claimed to be from an independent Jewish state in East Africa and that his country was the home of the Lost Tribes of Asher, Gad, Naphtali and Dan. He left his native country and boarded a ship in the company of another Jew named Asher. As ill luck would have it, one night there was a big storm and the boat overturned. He and his companion held on to a wooden plank and were thrown ashore amongst wild barbaric people who were black, tall and without any clothes.

As the story goes, his companion who was fleshy and fat was devoured by the wild people. Dani was lean and sick. They tried to feed him so that he would recover and grow fat. He was lucky to be saved by a big army from another place. They were fire worshippers and Dani was brought as a captive to a city called Aazin. He was sold to a Jewish merchant of the tribe of Issachar who returned with him to his country in Persia. The inhabitants lived in prosperity, had cattle and camels, asses and servants. They had no weapons, except knives. They were controlled by a judge whose name was Nahshon. Next to this group of Issachar, the children of Zebulun inhabited the mountains of

Paran. The trade of these people extended up to the river Euphrates. Beyond Mount Paran the tribe of Reuben also lived in peace and prosperity. The kings of Media and Persia ruled over them and they spoke Persian and also their holy tongue, Hebrew. He further narrated that the tribe of Ephraim and half of the tribe of Menasseh dwelt in the mountains of Nejd, near Mecca.

He found that the tribe of Simeon and the other half of the tribe of Menasseh dwelt in the land of the Chaldeans. The story ends with Dani and his group settling down ultimately in the land of Cush.

### **David Rubeni, Prince of Khaibar**

This is another fascinating story of one Prince David Rubeni who in the year 1524 travelled about as the ambassador of his brother Joseph, the Jewish king of Khaibar (Habor) in central India.

Prince David Rubeni travelled in great style, dressed in flowing Oriental robes, turbaned and carrying a golden sword from his native country by way of Abyssinia, Sudan and Egypt. He was received everywhere with excitement, particularly by the Jews who wished to know of the Jewish kingdom of Khaibar.

He told everybody that his brother was an independent Jewish monarch and that a distance away from Khaibar was the Jewish kingdom of Cranganore where the Jews of Cochin lived. For the first time the Jews of Europe came to know of the existence of Jews in Cochin, another limb of the Lost Tribes. Perhaps due to this the Jews of Amsterdam wrote to Cochin and sent a delegation in 1686. Prince Rubeni was received in state by the Pope and also by King John III of Portugal. They all encouraged him in his mission for a military alliance against the Turks.

The Venetian ambassador in Rome wrote a letter to the Signore of Venice in 1524 stating that "an ambassador has come to the Pope from the Jews in India offering him three hundred thousand warriors against the Turks and asking for artillery."

When asked about the purpose of his mission, Rubeni said, "we wish to go with God's help to Jerusalem and conquer the land of Israel from the Turks, for the end of days and salvation have arrived."

"We are kings," he said proudly, "and our ancestors were kings from the time of the destruction of the Temple till this day in the wilderness of Habor. We rule over the tribes of Reuben and Gad, half of the tribe of Menasseh and there are nine and a half tribes in the land of Ethiopia and other kingdoms. The nearest to us are the tribes of Simeon and the tribe of Benjamin and they are on the river Nile above the kingdom of Queen Sheba. They dwell between two rivers—the Blue River and the Black River which is the Nile. Their country is fertile and large and they have a king whose name is Barukh, the son of Japhet. He has four sons: the eldest Saadia, the second Abraham, the third Hoter and the fourth Moses. Their inhabitants are as numerous as ours in the wilderness of Habor, thirty myriads, and take counsel together."

Meanwhile, the Turks were defeated by the Portuguese and Rubeni's plans to get help from the Emperor and King John were doomed. Rubeni died in 1537 in the prison of the Emperor.

### **Hebrews, Israel, Bani Israel and the Jews**

To know more of the Lost Tribes, a brief explanation of the terms 'Hebrews,' 'Israel,' 'Bani Israel' and 'Jews' which appear frequently in the following pages is essential.

As shown above, the Hebrews were the descendants of



Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the last was also called Israel. Jacob's name was applied to the tribes who settled in Canaan and some lands nearby. Some of the tribes became two kingdoms; Israel was the kingdom of northern Palestine; while the land of Judah, one of the sons of Jacob, became the southern kingdom over which the family of King David ruled. These two populations are called Hebrews or children of Israel (Bani Israel).

Those in the north called themselves Israel and in the south Judeans. Subsequently, both kingdoms were destroyed by powerful invaders but the Judeans succeeded in re-establishing their kingdom. The Judeans therefore played a part in later history. The word 'Jew' is a simplification of the word 'Judean.' It is therefore commonly said that the Jews are the remnants of the Hebrews and the Israelites. The word is written in various languages as follows:

Judaeus	: Latin
Loudaios	: Greek
Yhudai	: Aramaic
Yehudi	: Hebrew
Yohud	: Kashmiri

## Traces of the Lost Tribes

### Falashas of Ethiopia (Abbyssinia)

While efforts are made to discover the Lost Tribes in the East, it may be interesting to narrate a brief history of the Falashas—the most ancient Jewish community in Africa some of whom recently have found their way into Israel. Joseph Halevy of Paris had a very touching experience when he saw for the first time an ancient village in Abyssinia keeping the torch of Judaism burning for more than 2000 years. The story as given by Joseph is very interesting and has thrown fresh light on their social and religious observances:

Joseph in the company of his Ethiopian servant crossed a hill and entered a small primitive village in Ethiopia in 1868. The villagers were astonished to see a white man in his European dress. They did not want to touch him nor to be touched. A man in a long robe, however, came with a bowl of water. The villagers thought that the Englishman had come to buy a sword or a knife but Joseph told them that he was not an Englishman but an Israelite like them and had come to inquire of their welfare and that he was also a Falasha, that he also worshipped their God 'Adonai' and followed the law of 'Moses.'

The villagers could not believe that there could be a white Falasha. Joseph assured them that he had seen Jerusalem, putting to rest their fears and they suddenly appeared very friendly and

started asking questions. "Have you really come from the holy city of Jerusalem and seen the Mount Zion and the house of the Lord of Israel, Bethlehem and the town of Hebron, where the holy Patriarchs are buried?"

Joseph says in his diary, "I was deeply moved on seeing those black faces light up at the memory of our glorious past."

He further told the villagers of the misery of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and that a mosque had been built on the spot of the Holy Temple. The villagers, who were completely cut off from the rest of the world and leading a primitive life, were under the impression that the Romans were in control of the Holy Land. They were very sad in getting this news.

After a prolonged conversation, the villagers became very friendly and Joseph asked them as to why some of them kept away from him and the purpose of the dish with water held by one of them.

Their explanation was, any contact with an outsider defiles them for one or more days during which period they remain secluded from the rest of the household. The Falashas were also careful to receive money in a vessel full of water so as to cleanse it from impurity.

Joseph was amazed to see the Falashas observing the ancient Mosaic regulations and he was astonished to know that they purchased from other nations only unground corn, salt cut into long cakes and did not eat any food prepared by unclean persons or strangers. Individuals were seen having drinking water poured out to them in the hollow of their hands.

On his second visit to the Falasha village, Joseph stayed for two days to learn more about their social customs. He was kept in a separate hut, he not being clean or purified in the custom of the Falashas. To know their dietary customs Joseph purchased



a sheep and requested the village leaders to cook for him and also join him in the feast.

Joseph observed that the feet of the sheep were tied up and it was kept in a clean corner for the purpose of slaughter. The leader with a small *kippa* on his head, recited a blessing repeated by all the group. A sharpened knife was brought to slaughter the goat and children had spread grass and fresh leaves on the ground to skin the sheep. The womenfolk did not observe *purda* (the veil) but were seen moving about freely with their menfolk, unlike the Moslems or the Abyssinian Christians.

In the course of this operation, the Falashas talked of the system of eating raw meat practised by the Amharas—eating while the animal was still palpitating and perhaps still breathing. The Falashas called the Amharas ‘dogs’ for this barbaric practice.

The Falashas are very much in the news—they have recently been accepted to settle in Israel. Their history is veiled in mystery and attempts have been made to know whether they belong to the Lost Tribes.

Emperor Haile Selassie, in his autobiography has touched on the Falasha history, that they descended from King Solomon. The Falashas say that they are the descendants of the Israelite notables sent to the kingdom of Queen Sheba by King Solomon as a guard of honor to accompany Menelik back to Ethiopia. Another theory about their origin is, when the children of Israel left Egypt at the time of the Exodus, some of the tribes broke off from the rest and instead of crossing the Red Sea, made their way down the coast of Africa to Ethiopia. It is also believed that the Falashas are descended from the group of Jews that fled Palestine after the destruction of the First and Second Temple. Eldad-Ha-Dani wrote a Hebrew book of his travels in the ninth

century, *Sefer Eldad*, stating that the Falashas are the Lost Tribe of Dan.

Alan Moorehead wrote in his book, *The Blue Nile*, that the Ethiopians were eaters of raw meat, heavy drinkers and on their icy heights (mountains) huddled together with their cattle at night and seldom washed while the Falashas on the other hand, cooked their meat, were sober by inclination and were so relentlessly hygienic that the Amhara accused them of "smelling of water."

The Falashas say that they came from Palestine in the time of King Solomon. It is written that Queen Sheba during her visit to Jerusalem, conceived a son whose father was Solomon. He was named Menelik or Ibn al-Hakim, (Son of the Sage) and that he became the founder of the royal dynasty of Abyssinia (The Second Book of Chronicles: 9). The Falashas established their origins in Abyssinia. According to Abyssinian folklore, Queen Sheba on her return to her kingdom, brought along with her a large number of Hebrews, such as scholars and artisans. Upon the birth of her son, this immigration was considerably augmented. It is believed that Menelik was raised and educated at the court of King Solomon at Jerusalem and he was his father's favorite, being handsome and intelligent. The Israelites, however, fearing that he would seize the throne after the death of King Solomon, insisted that he be sent back to his mother.

King Solomon crowned Menelik as King of Ethiopia and sent him home with a large following of thousands of Jews—teachers, artisans and builders. Two archaeologists have recently discovered (*Scientific American*, June 1988) that more than 2500 years ago the people near Lake Victoria knew the art of smelting iron in tall mud furnaces. There is every likelihood that Queen Sheba brought this technology and spread it in Africa to make swords and implements of daily use.

It is said King Solomon made a replica of the tablets of law to send them along with the priests who were to accompany the newly crowned king. The priest, however, deceived King Solomon by carrying away to Ethiopia the original tablets and leaving behind the replicas. It is believed that the original tablets may be found in the Church of Zion at Axum, the ancient capital of Ethiopia. In Kashmir there is a belief that Menelik, son of King Solomon, built the Takht-e-Suleiman on top of the hill in Srinagar.

### **Lemba Community of Africa**

This is yet another group of people in the Republic of Venda which is near Zimbabwe who are believed to belong to the Lost Tribes.

Dr. Margaret Nabarro is compiling a book on the Lemba and believes that the Lemba are Falashas who, due to upheavals in their country, moved southward and settled near Zimbabwe. It is mentioned that the Venda word for Jew is 'Yehud.'

Paul Kruger, the President of the Boer Republic from 1883, wrote that the Lemba belong to the Lost Tribes.

Prof. Tudor Parfitt in his book *The Thirteenth Gate* gives details of his meeting some of the Lemba people who he says are good skilled artisans, potters, iron and copper workers and number about half a million in Africa. They are dark, but have Semitic features. They say they keep Kosher, do not eat pork and circumcise their boys. Their old language 'Shona' has many Hebrew words. Christian missionaries aroused interest in the Lemba community about the Old Testament and Christianity.

Prof. Mathiva of the University of the National State of Lebowa in northern Transvaal is of the Lemba group and firmly believes that they are Falashas and thus part of the Lost Tribes.

### Lost Tribes in Afghanistan

In recent years several scholars have taken a deep interest in the origin of the tribes in Afghanistan, particularly the Pathans.

There are nearly sixty tribes in Afghanistan out of which the Pathans are distributed in the area of North West Pakistan (known during the erstwhile British rule as the North West Frontier Province) and some in the east and south of Afghanistan. Their population is about 15 million and are presumed to belong to the 'Ten Tribes of Israel.'

The history of this Lost Tribe in Afghanistan goes back to King Saul who bore a son named Jeremy. Jeremy fathered a son called Afghana. When King Saul and Jeremy were killed in action, Afghana was taken to King David's palace where he and his progeny lived for generations. When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in 588 BC, he took thousands of prisoners and settled them in Persia and Media, his newly acquired territories. From here the captives marched further east to safer places and settled in the Ghaur hills where they were known as Bani Israel.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (founder of the Ahmadiya movement of Islam) quotes Tabaqat-i-Nasri in his book *Jesus in India*, where it is mentioned that in the time of the Shabnisi Dynasty there lived a tribe called Bani Israel, some of whom were good traders. He further records that in 622 AD when Prophet Mohammed was spreading his message of Islam, his Quraish chief named Khalid ibn Walid brought under the banner of Islam five or six chiefs of the Jewish tribes. Quais among them was their leader and his name was Kish—the name of King Saul's father. After accepting Islam as their religion, they fought bravely for Mohammed and made many conquests, spreading the message of Islam. Greatly satisfied, Mohammed gave them gifts and prophesied that these people would attain greater victories.



The Holy Prophet saw that the chief of the tribe would always be known as Malik. Prophet Mohammed named Kish as Abdul Rashid and confirmed upon him the title 'Pathan.' According to Afghan writers, 'Pathan' is a Syriac word meaning 'rudder.' Since the newly converted Quais was a guide to his tribe, like the rudder of a ship, he was awarded the title 'Pathan.'

According to Pathan genealogies, Kish married the daughter of Khalid ibn Walid and three sons were born to him, namely Sarban, Bitan and Gurgasht. Sarban had two sons, Sacharj Yun and Karsh. It is said that the descendants of Yun are Afghans. People of Asia Minor and Muslim historians call the Afghans 'Sulaimanis,' derived from the name Solomon.

The Pathan tribes claim their descent from Kish and call themselves 'Bani Israel' (children of Israel).

Khwaja Nazir Ahmad in his book *Jesus in Heaven on Earth* (1952) gives a very detailed history of the people of Afghanistan with special reference to the Pathans who he says belong to the Lost Tribes of Israel.

The most ancient manuscript *Rauza-ul-Bab Twarikh-ul-Akbar wal-Ansab* (The Garden of the Learned in the History of Great Men and Genealogies) by Abu Suleman Daud (717 AH) gives the history of the people and states that ever since the times of Moses, the ancestors of the Afghans had to face great hardships. They were expelled from place to place and exterminated; Jerusalem was sacked more than once and their ancestors, the Israelites, were carried into captivity. The author has given a detailed history of Jacob in Chapter 1 and in the next chapter has traced the genealogies of the Afghan tribes right up to King Saul.

*Majma-ul-Ansab* by Mestoufi gives a detailed genealogy of Kais (Kish) the tribal head of the Afghans in a series of 31

generations to King Saul and 45 generations to Abraham.

In his *Mirat-ul-Alam* (The Mirror of the World), Bukhtwar Khan gives an account of the journeys of the Afghans from the Holy Land to Ghor, Ghazni, Kabul and other places in Afghanistan and proves that the Afghans are the descendants of Israel through King Saul.

Some authors, such as Syed Jalal-ud-Din Afghani and Syed Abdul Jabbar Shah, the ex-ruler of Swat, deserve special mention. The two authors have given genealogies of different Afghan tribes right up to King Saul and conclude that the Afghans represent the Lost Tribes of Israel. A few of the western writers who travelled extensively in this part of the world have written about the people of Afghanistan.

According to *Travels in Bokhara* (1835) by Sir Alexander Brunes, the Afghans call themselves 'Bani Israel' (Children of Israel), but consider the term 'Yehoodi' or 'Jew' to be one of reproach. They say that after the overthrow of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar transplanted them into the towns of Ghor near Bamiyan and that they were named after their chief Afghana ... They say they lived as Jews till Khalid ibn Walid summoned them in the first century of the Mohammedans to assist in the war against the infidels. For their services on that occasion Kayse (Kish) who was their leader, got the title Abdul-Rashid, which means the servant of the Mighty. He was also told to consider himself as the Butan (an Arabic word) or mast of the tribe, on which their posterity would hinge; since that time the Afghans are sometimes called Putan or Pathan by which name they are familiarly known in India.

In *Travels in Kashmir, Ladakh and Iskardos*, J.T. Vigne writes that Esau Khel of Khaibar Pass speaks of the greatness of their tribes in former days and states that Esau and Zaka

(Issachar) are Jewish names and they existed before the Moham-medans came to Afghanistan.

J.P. Ferrier in his *History of the Afghans* (1858) has written that the Afghans represent the ten tribes of Israel. In support of his views, he recorded a very significant fact.

When Nadir Shah, marching to the conquest of India, arrived at Peshawar, the chief of the tribe of Yusoof-Zyes presented him with a Bible written in Hebrew and several other articles that had been used in their ancient worship and which they preserved. These articles were at once recognized by the Jews who were in his army.

An Indian engineer/archaeologist deputed to repair the tallest Buddha in the world which is at Bamiyan reported that he had seen Arabic writing at the base of a tower in Ghazni, "these are the stubborn Bani Israel of this village who would not be converted to Islam. They all, therefore, have been put to the sword and this tower is in their memory."

Dr. Shalva Weil, a lecturer in anthropology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, carried out research on their social customs and food habits. It was observed that the Pathans perform circumcision of the male child on the eighth day after birth. Menfolk wear *arba confot* and a type of *tallit*; their womenfolk observe the purification laws of *nidda*, light candles on Friday night and observe food taboos similar to the laws of *Kashrut*. Some Pathans, she observed, wear amulets with the words 'Shema Israel' written on them.

In her article, "Pathan Puzzle," Dr. Weil writes, "When in Kabul, I arrived at one of the villages of the Afridi tribes late one Friday afternoon. I stayed with a Muslim family, but imagine my surprise when they lit candles and hid them in a corner—a relic of an ancient custom; so they described it, but they were

unable to explain the reason for it.

"In the evening they served grape juice to the members of the household. By Islamic law, it is forbidden to drink of the vine, but they have an ancient tradition which must be preserved."

The tribe that was contacted in Gutlibag near Gandarbal in Kashmir say they are close to the Pashtoons of Afghanistan.

Rabbi Avichayil of Jerusalem has shown active interest in discovering the Lost Tribes and has created the 'Amishav Foundation' (My People Return). He has discovered the Lost Tribes in Afghanistan and recently a remnant of the Kaifeng community of China.

Shalom Dadesh who was born in Herat (Afghanistan) and who accompanied a group of Jews from Afghanistan, passing through Peshawar on their way to Israel, narrated:

"On my way to Israel I went through Peshawar and at the border one of the guards stopped me for a security check. When he saw we were Jews, he asked, 'Are we also Jews? See, I wear *tzitzit*, my father wears *tzitzit*, my mother lights candles, my grandmother lights candles—so are we Jews or are we not?'

"I understood from him that he was of the Levani tribe. According to him they were the descendants of the tribe of Benjamin. I asked him in jest, 'why don't you seem to want to be Jews?' He answered, 'The day will come when we will return to Judaism.' "

In *The Exiled and the Redeemed*, Yitzhak Bene Zvi (the late President of Israel) has written stories about Jewish travellers and European explorers from the Middle Ages until the present day who returned with news of the Afghans giving their Jewish history and social customs retained by them for centuries.

This is the history of the tribes of Rabbani (Reuben) Shinwari (Shimeon), Levani (Levi), Dafthani (Naftali), Jajani (Gad),



Ashuri (Asher), Afridi (Ephraim) and Yusufzai (Joseph) who are scattered in the mountains of Afghanistan, and have been clinging for centuries to some traditions of their Hebrew ancestor, King Saul.

### **The Lost Tribes in India**

The history of the Lost Tribes in India can be read against a brief introduction to India.

A developed civilization existed in India, a vast country equal to the size of Europe, excluding Russia. Archaeologists discovered the Indus Valley civilization (over 4,000 years old) and the Mohenjodaro and Harappa sites indicated an excellent system of drainage and houses of brick. Educational institutions at Nalanda and Taxila were flourishing, attracting attention from all parts of India and outside. Jainism and Buddhism were flourishing (in about 600 BC) spreading the message of truth and *ahinsa*.

Trade existed between India and the West right from the time of King Solomon (974-937 BC). Silk routes both over land and by sea were in operation. Archaeologists recently discovered a Roman port at Rameshwaram (south India) where Roman coins and pottery were found.

### **MARK TWAIN ON INDIA**

Mark Twain, the renowned American writer, visited India in 1896. Mark Twain said, "India is the only foreign land I day-dream about or deeply long to see again." He wrote:

"This is indeed India; the land of dreams and romance, of fabulous wealth and fabulous poverty, of splendor and rags, of palaces and hovels, of famine and pestilence, of

genii and giants and Aladdin lamps, of tigers and elephants, the cobra and the jungle, the country of a hundred nations and a hundred tongues, of a thousand religions and two million gods, cradle of the human race, birth place of human speech, mother of history, grandmother of legend, great grandmother of tradition, the one sole country under the sun that is endowed with imperishable interest for alien prince and alien peasant, for lettered and ignorant, wise and fool, rich and poor, bond and free, the one land that all men desire to see and having seen once by even a glimpse, would not give that glimpse for the shows of all the rest of the world combined.

#### LOST TRIBES IN COCHIN

In south India we have a living example of another Lost Tribe, the Jews of Cochin. Their history has been fascinating as can be seen from the details given by several travellers and scholars. The ancient synagogue built in 1568 and the copper plates presented by the King to Joseph Rabban sometime in 950 AD bear testimony to their history.

The Bible mentions the merchant navy of King Solomon which used to sail to India once in every three years, to buy gold, silver, ivory, sandalwood, precious stones, spices, monkeys and peacocks. The port of Ophir mentioned in the Bible was, according to some experts, Nala Sopara, 30 km. to the north of Bombay.

This ancient contact between the land of the Bible and India is attributed to several words in Hebrew which are common to the Sanskrit and Tamil languages.

The old Tamil word 'Takai' became 'Tuki' in Hebrew. The word for monkey is 'Koph' in Hebrew and 'Kapi' in Sanskrit.

Cotton is 'Karpos' in Hebrew and 'Karpasain' in Sanskrit. Saffron is 'Karkan' in Hebrew and 'Kunkuma' in Sanskrit.

Sandalwood used by King Solomon for flooring and pillars is native of India. References to Indian products like preserved ginger, linen and Indian iron bars are given in the Talmud.

It is also said that the Romans had trade between the Red Sea and the Malabar coast and founded a small Roman colony in Cranganore in the second century. Recent excavations in Pondicherry and Rameshwaram indicate traces of Roman civilization, coins of King Herod's period, pottery, and Roman walls.

Eusebious, Bishop of Caesarea about 264-340 AD, mentions that Pantaenus of the Catechacal School of Alexandria went to India where he found some Christians possessing a Gospel of St. Matthew in Hebrew given to them by Bartholomew. This same tradition is found in Rufinus.

Some scholars have said that the first settlers of the Malabar coast came in the merchant ships of King Solomon around 973 BC. After the fall of the Assyrian empire in 605 BC some of the descendants of the Ten Tribes were carried into captivity by Shalmanezzer. When they were set free, they are said to have settled in Cranganore which was situated about 20 miles north of Cochin. After the conquest of Judea by Babylon in 586 BC a further batch of refugees is said to have sailed to Port Cranganore. The Cochin Jews have a tradition that ten thousand Jews are said to have come to Cranganore soon after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD.

The ancestors of the Bene Israel of India as the tradition goes, came in ships and as a result of a storm, were shipwrecked on the Konkan coast south of Bombay. It cannot be ruled out that the destination of these ships was either Cranganore near Cochin or some other location in India where a large Jewish

community was already happily settled.

Evidence of the existence of Jews in Kerala around the birth of Christianity is available. In a wedding song of the ancient Christians of Malabar, mention is made of a Jewish merchant, Habban, who was sent by King Gondapharos, to bring a builder to design and construct a palace for him more beautiful than the Temple of King Solomon. St. Thomas, the Apostle, arrived in Cranganore in 55 AD. He was received by a Jewish flute girl and he stayed in the Jewish quarter of the city. Forty Jews agreed to be baptized by him but the majority stuck to their faith. An extract from the *The Acts of Judas Thomas* in the following pages partly corroborates the above belief of the Christians.

### *Contact With Amsterdam*

The first contact of the Jews of Amsterdam with the Jews of Cochin (1676-1687) took place when the Portuguese Sephardic Community of Amsterdam exchanged letters with the leaders of the Cochin Jews. The Amsterdam community received a letter written in Hebrew in 1676 AD, perhaps from David Rahabi, the leader of the community. This letter gives a useful account of the origin of the Cochin Jews, their population and their first arrival in Cochin.

There was an interesting statement in this letter. "Now all this was written and sealed with the King's seal and cut on a bronze tablet with an iron pen with diamond point, so that his successors may never accuse us of lying or changing the agreement. This was done in the year 4250 after the creation of the world and the bronze tablet is still present in our eyes..."

A decade after the receipt of this important letter of 1676 from Cochin, the community of Amsterdam in 1686 sent a delegation to Cochin headed by Mosseh Pereyera de Paira.



The report of the delegation entitled "Notisias dos Judeos de Cochim" is the most comprehensive and interesting account ever written about these 'remnants of Israel' in Cochin. In this report Paira has mentioned that eleven synagogues were functioning at that time. Of these the Pardesi Synagogue is functioning even today. The 400th anniversary of this beautiful synagogue was celebrated in 1968 and a commemoration stamp was issued by the Government of India to mark the occasion.

This small community of Jews in Cochin was not well known in the West. I had presented one of the commemoration stamps to an American visitor. When he returned to America, he presented the stamp to his daughter who showed her new acquisition to her class teacher. The girl was in tears when the teacher said, "This is a fake stamp, there are no Jews in India!"

Mosseh Paira in his report has mentioned the three copper plates presented by the King to Joseph Rabban. The Jews of Cochin have in their prized possession these plates on which are engraved in the ancient Tamil language, written in the archaic Vetteluttu script, details of land and certain privileges granted to Joseph Rabban by the Hindu king of Malabar, Bhaskara Ravi Verma, a dynasty which ruled from the third to the twelfth century.

It was customary those days with the Rajas to grant lands and other privileges to their favorites. These plates were given by Rajah Bhaskara Ravi Verma in 379 AD to Joseph Rabban who received the village of Anjuvannam and all its revenue. In addition, certain special rights to ride an elephant, to be carried in a palanquin, to have a state umbrella, and other rights were granted to him.

Dr. W. Fishel recently carried out extensive research into the heaps of records which had remained untouched and hundreds

of tombstones and inscriptions in Hebrew to tell of the social, economic, political and military aspects of their times.

Another source of details of this ancient community can be had from *Epistola Jecheskiel Rachabi ad Tobias Boaz* (1768). Several famous travellers, for example, Al Breuni, Al Kazwini, Benjamin of Toledo, Spain, Marco Polo, Ibn Batuta, and others have given details of the seaborne trade of the Cochin coast with the West.

The translation of the copper plates is as follows:

“Hail and Prosperity! The following gift was graciously made by him who had assumed the title of King of Kings, His Majesty the King Shri Parkaran Iravi Vanmar, whose ancestors have been wielding the sceptre for many hundred thousand years, in the thirty sixth year, on the day on which he dwelt in village Muriricote, was pleased to make the following gifts:

“We have granted to Joseph Rabban the village of Anjuvannam together with the seventy-two proprietary rights, tolls on boats and carts, the revenue and the title of Anjuvannam, the lamp of the day, a cloth spread in front to walk on, a palanquin, a parasol, a Vaduga (a Telugu drum), a trumpet, a gateway, a garland decoration with festoons, and so forth. We have granted him the land tax and weight tax; moreover we have sanctioned with these copper plates that he need not pay the dues which the inhabitants of the other cities pay the Royal Palace, and that he may enjoy the benefits which they enjoy. To Joseph Rabban, the Prince of Anjuvannam and to his descendants, sons and daughters and to his nephews and to the sons-in-law who married his daughters in natural

succession, so long as the world and moon exist, Anjumannam shall be his hereditary possession.

With the knowledge of:

Govarathan Marthandan,	<i>Chief of Vanadu</i>
Kodai Chirikandan,	<i>Chief of Venapallinadu</i>
Manavepala Manavian,	<i>Chief of Vallunadu</i>
Kodai Iravi,	<i>Chief of Nedumpurayarnadu</i>
Moorkan Chathan,	<i>Sub-Commander of the forces</i>
Vandalacheri Kandan,	<i>The Prime Minister</i>

Written by Kelappan

Rabbi Nissim, a 14th century poet and traveller, may have seen the glory of this King Joseph Rabban to sing:

"I travelled from Spain.  
I had heard of the city of Shingly.  
I longed to see an Israeli King.  
Him, I saw with my own eyes."

This small historic community survived and maintained Jewish life and culture in remote Diaspora for several centuries. With the creation of Israel, they saw Prophet Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled and en bloc they left and settled in a kibbutz near Jerusalem. Today there are just a few families left in Cochin whose days are numbered; yet they have managed to maintain even today prayers at the beautiful synagogue in Jew-Town, Cochin.

#### BENE ISRAEL OF THE BOMBAY COAST

This is yet another link of the Lost Tribes—the Bene Israel of the west coast of Bombay. This small but ancient community settled on the west coast of Maharashtra and numbered about

35,000 prior to the creation of Israel.<sup>1</sup> The other two groups of Jews in India were the historic community of Jews in Cochin and the small but prosperous business group from Iran and Iraq of recent origin who arrived in India and settled in Bombay and Calcutta.

The Bene Israel community of India has a very interesting and long history of survival and several scholars in recent years have probed their past with wonder. It is a miracle that though remote from the mainstream of Jewish life, separated from it by oceans and mountains, they maintained their traditions throughout so many centuries. It is commonly believed that the Bene Israel are part of the Lost Tribes.

Dr. Wilson in 1838 gave an interesting account of the Bene Israel and stated that they have been established for many ages in India and that they belonged to the Lost Tribes of Israel. Mr. Israel Joseph Benjamin II in his work *Eight Years in Asia and Africa* (Hanover, 1859), has stated that they are the lineal descendants of the Ten Tribes and in the time of Hoshea, the last King of Israel, they were carried away as captives. Mr. Jacob Saphir in his book *Eben Saphir* (Vol. II) published in Hebrew (Mainz, 1875) stated that they belonged to the tribe of Judah and that they came to India about sixteen hundred years ago.

Mr. Haeem Kehimkar in his book *The History of the Bene Israel in India* has covered the subject in a very comprehensive manner and has done a very valuable service to his community.

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1. Bombay was a fishing island. It came into British hands as a part of the dowry of Catherine of Braganza on her marriage to Charles II, who in turn leased it to the East India Company for £ 10/- a year. By the year 1830, a new era of British mercantile tolerance offered boundless opportunity to the independent trader. Parsis, Muslims and Indians were trading peacefully making huge profits.



His family is one of the few which can trace their ancestry upto six generations and his family tree is given here.

The traditions of the Bene Israel relate that their ancestors came to India about two thousand years ago when their ships were caught in a storm and were shipwrecked near the Henery Kenery Islands just off the Konkan coast, south of Bombay. A few survived and the dead were buried in the ancient cemetery at Navgaon. A memorial has been erected in this ancient cemetery to commemorate this event.

It is also believed that the ancestors of the Bene Israel fled from northern Galilee during the bloody persecutions instituted by Antiochus Epiphanes<sup>2</sup> which led finally to the Maccabean uprising. The flight of the Bene Israel, however, occurred before this uprising. This is based on the religious observances of the Bene Israel of holidays, fasts, of birth, marriage, burial and sacrificial rites. The Bene Israel did not celebrate Hanukah which commemorates an incident that occurred after the Maccabees liberated the temple. Likewise, they had been unaware of the destruction of the temple by Titus.

The coastal region where the Bene Israel settled in a destitute condition was devoid of any roads or other means of communication with the rest of India and the land was not very fertile either; mostly cut off by creeks and mountains. The climate was hot and humid with heavy rains during the monsoon season. They took to oil pressing and agriculture, including coconut plantations. The new settlers had brought with them the art of

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2. History has recorded that Antiochus Epiphanes in 175 BC planned to exterminate the religion of the Hebrews. He put to death 40,000 in just three days and sold many as slaves. He defiled the Temple, pillaged the Treasury and collected a large booty.

pressing oil from olives. They worked for six days and kept their establishment closed on the seventh day. Hence their neighbors called them 'Saturday Oilmen.'

The port of Cheul situated about 15 miles from these islands is believed to be one of the most ancient ports of the west coast of India.

According to Strabo (25 BC), the Indian fleet in the Red Sea increased in a few years from a few ships to 120 sails. Cheul is spoken of by the great geographer Ptolemy (150 CE) as the the headland and emporium of Symulla or Timulla between the river Binda or Bassein Creek and Mahad.

*The Bombay Gazetteer* records that the Greeks who traded with Symulla and Timulla (probably Cheul) gave Ptolemy information of India. The Chinese pilgrim Huven Tsang (642 AD) makes mention of the port as Chimolo in his diary. This perhaps refers to Cheul.<sup>3</sup>

Tradition among the Bene Israel makes mention of a David Rahabi who discovered them as a Lost Tribe in the villages of Konkan on the basis of their feasts and fasts, dietary laws, marriage customs and circumcision of the male child on the seventh day and strict observance of Sabbath. 'Shema-Israel' was on their lips for all occasions; they had lost everything in the shipwreck, including their prayer books and other religious artefacts.

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3. There is evidence to show that ancient Indian mariners were no whit behind the Phoenicians in the science of shipbuilding as well as the navigation of the open seas. They not only built ships larger than those of the Phoenicians, galleys with a hundred oars, but were experienced sailors undertaking voyages to distant lands (see Rawlinson's n.6, *India and the Western World*). It is asserted that for nearly 30 centuries (circa 1,500 BC to about 1,400 AD) India maintained commercial contacts via established sea routes with Phoenicians, Hebrews, Assyrians, Greeks, Egyptians and Romans.

To ascertain their dietary laws, Rahabi brought a basketful of fish, both with scales and without, to be cooked for him. He observed that the women promptly separated the fish with scales for cooking and discarded those without scales.

Rahabi was fully convinced about their Jewishness and organized Hebrew training classes and other religious rites which they had forgotten. He appointed three Kazis (religious leaders) from amongst the trained ones (Jhiradkar, Shapurkar and Rajpurkar) to function as teachers and conduct all religious services and rites.

David Rahabi noted that the Bene Israel did not observe the feast of Channukah and did not know about the destruction of the Second Temple by the Roman Emperor Titus. David Rahabi was responsible for bringing them to modern Judaism. Indian history indicates that the Bene Israel were in the army of Shivaji and with the coming of the British many moved to Bombay and joined the British army. Subsequently, they were dispersed to Poona, Ahmedabad, Karachi and elsewhere where they prospered and built synagogues. In Bombay alone there are at present five synagogues functioning, including the oldest 'Shaar Ha Rahamim,' built in 1796.

The Bene Israel took their surnames on the basis of the villages of their sojourn. Over 130 surnames have been found with corresponding villages in the Konkan area. This is common in Italy, Germany and elsewhere in Europe where the Jews have taken the name of the village and town where they settled as their own surname.

Henry Shoskes in his book *Your World and Mine* (1947), talks about the Bene Israel group in Bombay. He saw the children and the Hazan praying.

"Their garb and their complexion seemed foreign, but their

eyes shining like little stars were as unmistakably Jewish as those of our boys in Poland who used to chant the Friday evening prayers with similar enthusiasm. Those children and their villages are ashes now, but here in remote Byculla, the symbolic farther shore of the Sambation river, there resounded the same stirring call, 'Awaken, for thy light hath come!'

"Choking with emotion, Cynowicz and I joined in the song. We did not mind the strangeness of the tune, the words or their meaning; the faith they expressed was the same as we had always known."<sup>4</sup>

The Bene Israel, though microscopic in number, produced judges, doctors, engineers, architects, army and navy officers, teachers and actors. On the creation of Israel, a large number of families migrated leaving behind only a handful in bigger cities like Bombay, Poona and Ahmedabad.

Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, in a speech she made in 1968 in Cochin, said, "The Jewish community in India has rendered and continues to render notable service in many fields. It has contributed men of distinction to business and industry, to the civil services and the armed forces and the world of scholarship."

#### KASHMIR: LOST TRIBE IN GUTLIBAGH-GANDARBAL

Remnants of the Lost Tribes have been discovered in Kashmir. In the picturesque valley of Yusmarg, the Yudu tribe call themselves descendants of the Ten Tribes. Another such village is Gutlibagh near Gandarbale where the villagers call themselves 'Bani Israel' and are known as Pakhtoons by the locals.

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4. Henry Shoskes, *Your World and Mine*, New York: Lipton Publishing Cor



Being fascinated by this history, I travelled to Gandarbal about 20 kilometers north of Srinagar on the way to Sonmarg. The road leading to the right from Gandarbal brought us to this beautiful village of Gutlibagh, set in a picturesque surrounding of snow-capped mountains, rivers and green meadows.

The villagers, wearing dark brown robes, whether summer or winter, a skull cap, a shepherd rod in hand for tending their sheep and the women in long flowing gowns with head covered, carrying baskets, presented a true painting of Biblical Judea.<sup>5</sup>

The head of the village, Mir Alam Naqashbandi, nearly 90 years old, robust and tall, formerly a member of the Kashmir Assembly and his kinsmen welcomed us. I, through my interpreter, asked him to tell us the history of his people. He said he was not well and found it difficult to speak. Seeing our disappointment and being told that we had come from Prof. Fida Hassanain, Ex-Director of Archaeology, Kashmir, he opened up and narrated the story of Jacob and his twelve sons and how they got dispersed in several directions as a result of attack from cruel invaders. He mentioned that his group, though Muslim, were descendants of the tribe of Judah. I asked him as to how many of his people were settled in and around Gutlibagh. "All over Kashmir," was his reply.

Another visitor asked Mir Alam to explain why there was so much fighting and bloodshed when as told by him God was One and all mankind His children, Mir Alam recited a Persian couplet in reply:

"Ten fakirs can cover themselves comfortably under one quilt but not two kings in a vast continent."

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5. Serious scientific genetic studies (blood culture test) should be undertaken to establish the background of this tribe in Kashmir.

It was interesting to note that this group, though Muslim, did not marry outside their tribe. I was keen to verify this, and whether he possessed any ancient rare books or articles but Mir Alam was feeling tired and exhausted, being not well.

In an earlier interview with Prof. Fida Hassanain, Mir Alam had stated:

“Most of us are from Swat and are descendants of Jacob. As such we are called Bani Israel. We are the descendants of Jacob, whose father was Isaac and whose father was Abraham. We are thus Bani Israel and we are not of Firab origin. Jacob had twelve sons and the twelve tribes are scattered all over among many races. We were Buddhists and before that we were Bani Israel. We are those Jews, rather that group of Jews who disobeyed Moses by refusing to take the heavenly food ‘Mannan-Salva.’ Thereafter we left Moses and like nomads proceeded towards the East. It is true that the Jews will have to suffer and run away from place to place and even if they touch the rocks, these stones will flee. Even the Turks are our brothers for they are also Israelites who disobeyed Moses like us. I explained earlier that many centuries ago, we came to Kashmir via Gilgit and Chitral.”

#### THE LOST TRIBES IN MANIPUR

During the course of my research on the Lost Tribes of Israel some years ago, I heard about a group of people in Manipur, who claimed that they had descended from the Lost Tribes and so I took the first opportunity to visit them. To do so, in 1974 I went to Imphal, the capital of Manipur which is adjoining the state of Nagaland and Mizoram.

On my arrival at Imphal, I saw a crowd of people waiting to receive me in the Guest House. It was already late afternoon

and we hired a taxi to visit some of the villages to meet members of these tribes.

Moirang is about 35 kms. from Imphal and a memorial exists here of the great Indian freedom fighter, Subhash Chandra Bose. Here, I met the first group of people who called themselves Manipuri Jews. Among them was Mr. V.L. Benjamin, living in a cottage with his wife, two brothers and sister Bina, weaving on a village loom. He was the president of the newly formed Manipur Jewish Organization. I was told by him that his father, the late Mr. Japheth, was responsible for arousing interest in the community regarding their links with the Jewish religion.

This was the beginning and a small booklet, *Israelis of Manipur State*, was published by them. Bualsang is about 10 km. from Moirang and a large group of men, women and children were anxiously waiting to see for the first time this Jewish visitor from outside their circle. Mr. Y. Stephen, Honorary Secretary of this organization and the others present accorded me a warm welcome, with garlands and songs in their mother tongue. He told me that my arrival had been delayed by nearly six hours and a large part of the group had gone away in frustration. I blessed the congregation, when Hebrew prayers were perhaps heard for the first time by the group.

Churadchandpur is another village about 15 km. from Bualsang and there we met another group of villagers, including Mr. T. Daniel who gave an interesting account of the activities of the group. It was already dark and after being served some special Manipuri snacks, we proceeded to see a school which was made of bamboo with a thatched room. Some more people had collected here to receive me and their enthusiasm was beyond my expectations. Next to the school in full session, a large Christian missionary prayer meeting was in progress.

Mr. G. Israel of this village, an elderly person, told me that he had secured some holy Jerusalem mud and swallowed it so that even if he did not go to Jerusalem he would be holy. His father who died a few years earlier had done the same. An old man presented me with a beautiful bamboo basket containing seven eggs—a sign of good luck. On my return to Imphal, we were driven to a wayside inn run by Miriam and her husband Isaac. Miriam, who had been fasting all day to see a Jewish visitor, buried her head in my hands and burst out crying in expression of her longing to go to Israel. I was much moved by the sincere and deep longing of the villagers to go to the Holy Land. I was told that there were a few more families in Mizoram who claimed to be descendants of the Lost Tribes. These tribes had taken Biblical names in the last few years or so.

Their songs and stories indicate that their ancestors wandered through Persia, Afghanistan and the Hindukush Valley before moving on towards Tibet. This cold snow-clad territory of Tibet did not give them enough livelihood and they travelled on and on, crossed the river Wei and arrived in Kaifeng-Fu in China, where they established a colony in about 231 AD. There they lived happily and prospered until the Mongols attacked China and this group of Kaifeng-Fu Jews then fled into the interior and took shelter in caves. They were known as 'cave dwellers.' Some moved into Burma and were called 'Lusi' or 'Kachin.' 'Lu' means tribe and 'Si' means ten—the Ten Tribes. These tribal Jews have old folk songs, the meaning of some of which indicate their connection with Jerusalem.

### *The King and I*

An interesting article, "The King and I" written by T.K. Thomas appeared in *The Times of India*, Delhi on April 16, 1981. In



brief, the story goes as follows.

“The Raja of Sakawrdai’s small kingdom is a village about 130 kms north-east of Aizawal, capital of Mizoram, and has about 22 huts. His subjects are mostly his relatives; they respect him as their ‘King.’ He has a few acres of land and grows tea and coffee. He also has a few dozen goats and poultry. The Raja has no elephant or car and has to move about on foot.

“The interesting part is, he says he belongs to the ‘Lost Ten Tribes of Israel.’ He narrates that the Hamar people, to whom he belongs, inhabit Mizoram and parts of Manipur, mostly in the Churadchandpur area, and that they came from Burma. He quotes a Hamar song when performing a dance ‘Sikpul,’ which is the name of a place in Burma. The dance is highly ritualistic and is performed in memory of their place of origin. He states that the song makes mention of the River Nile, Abraham’s father Terah, Jehovah’s division of the waters, His protection of the children of Israel from the pursuing army of the Pharaoh, the pillar of fire and the cloud. The Raja further narrates that Adam in his language means one who is cured. Though the Mizos were converted to Christianity a century ago, to the Raja the Mizos belong to the ‘Ten Tribes of Israel.’

#### *Link with Kaifeng-Fu Community in China*

This Lost Tribe of Manipur claims to have a direct link with the ancient Jewish community of China. A brief history of Chinese Jews mentions that the earliest Jewish settlement in China was during the first two centuries. It is not known as to why the Jews had to settle in this far-off land. Perhaps one explanation can be that the Lost Tribes had already reached Kashmir, Tibet and Malabar in south India and the flourishing silk trade of China with the Roman Empire passed through these regions.

Enterprising Jewish traders in this business may have established trading centers in China. It is natural that such centers should gradually become permanent settlements.

This is the story of the Lost Tribes who have forgotten everything in these remote hills of Manipur—Hebrew prayers, dietary laws, circumcision, and even Jewish festivals. They live on a strong hope that one day Isaiah's prophecy will come true and they will be gathered in the Promised Land from which they have been separated for over 2000 years.

“Then he will raise a signal to the nations and gather together those driven out of Israel; he will assemble Judah's scattered people from the four corners of the earth.”

Isaiah (11: 12)

“I will bring your children from the East  
And gather you all from the West.  
I will say to the North, ‘Give them up,’  
And to the South, ‘Do not hold them back.’  
Bring my sons and daughters from afar.  
Bring them from the ends of the earth.”

Isaiah (43: 5, 6 and 7)

## KARENS OF BURMA AND ASSAM

Dr. George Moore in his book on the Lost Tribes has given a special chapter to the Karens who lived in Burma and Assam.

Mr. Mason, an American missionary, did pioneering research on the Karens. He observed this group of people in Tavoy and Tenasserim in Burma. His research has been recorded in the *Calcutta Christian Observer*, 1835. Some excerpts are given here:

“The people of this region were called Ehom or Ahom—who once ruled over Assam and their religion was Buddhism. The

two tribes, Thei and Kho, were known as Amra. The meaning of this word 'Amra' in Arabic is the tribes which could mean Hebrew tribes. The Karens praise their Creator in the following words:

“He was in the beginning of the world;  
God is endless and eternal;  
He was in the beginning of the world;  
God is unchangeable and eternal;  
He existed in ancient time at the beginning.”

Mason observed their personal appearance, dress and religious traditions, and the most striking of their sacred words is the name of their Deity, 'Yoowah,' a word similar to that in the Buddhist inscriptions at Girnar and Delhi. 'Yoowah' and 'Jaho' is a contraction of Jehovah.

The traditions of the Karens are indicative of their Israelitish origin. They said that they offered oxen in sacrifice.

They account for their use of the bones of fowls for divination in a singular manner; asserting that God (Yoowah) in ancient times gave them His word on leather, but that the family to whose custody it was committed having laid it on a shelf, a fowl scratched it down and it was destroyed by a swine.

### **The Lost Tribes in China**

The Jewish settlement in China has always been shrouded in mystery. In those days, very few western scholars wanted to visit China. The earliest visitor was Marco Polo, who went to the east and returned to his native city of Venice after nearly 25 years. His diary gives fantastic tales about the various countries he visited. No historical proof is available as to when these Lost Tribes finally found their way to China. It has been proven that

during the Hun Dynasty, 2nd century BC, the Jews came mostly from Persia and settled down in different places and finally in large numbers in the city of Kaifeng-Fu, on the Hwangho (Yellow River), capital of Honan, then the residence of the ruling dynasty. They thus enjoyed the protection of the Chinese rulers.

It is said that on a memorial stone found in China 70 families came to settle in the reign of an early Sung emperor. The Jews came in groups, bringing their families, their children, their rabbis and their craftsmen. They were peaceful, religious and respected the elderly—resembling in many ways the rich traditions of the Chinese.

Thus they prospered and multiplied in the protection of the hospitable Chinese people and nobody interfered with them. In the seventh century, the ruling emperor of the Tang Dynasty appointed a special Mandarin to take care of Jewish matters and especially ordered him to go once every year to the synagogue at Kaifeng-Fu and to burn incense as an expression of his imperial grace and favor. As it was customary in all Chinese places of worship to have a tablet hung up with the name of the emperor written in gilded Chinese characters, a tablet of such a design was also hung in the synagogue of Kaifeng-Fu; at the top of this, however, they placed another one in Hebrew "Hear, Oh Israel! The Lord, our God, the Lord is One!" A Chinese document records that the Jews excelled in agriculture and commerce and were known for their integrity, fidelity and strict observance of their religion.

They were dressed like the Chinese, spoke Chinese but prayed in Hebrew. They had teachers to teach their children Torah and the Hebrew language and strictly followed the dietary rules. Thus they were called 'Tai Chin Chiao,' meaning "those who extract the sinews—clean dieticians."



Abdul Zeyd al-Hassan, an Arabian traveller in the ninth century, travelled in China and recorded that the Jews enjoyed cordial relations with the Chinese, especially in Kaifeng-Fu. In 1000 AD, high imperial honors were bestowed upon several Jews at Kaifeng-Fu. In 1163, construction of a new synagogue was undertaken at the cost of the government. In the 15th century, the great synagogue was renovated at government expense.

Christian missionaries in 1600 AD were the first to report the existence of Jews in several cities in the interior of China. Kaifeng-Fu, in the province of Honan, had a large Jewish settlement, they reported. Solomon Grayzel mentions in his book, *A History of the Jews* (pp. 148-49),

“... and the news about the existence of Chinese Jews reached the Jews of Europe and America at the end of the eighteenth century. On inquiries made by the English Jews, a reply was received through the British Consul. The Chinese Jews expressed in this letter their joy that Jews were still found outside China and asserted that they prayed daily, with tears in their eyes, for the restoration of their religion.”

Francois Bernier in his book, *Travels in the Moghul Empire* (1656-1668) records:

“In China, indeed, there are people of that nation for I have lately seen letters in the hands of our Reverend Father the Jesuit of Delhi, written by a German Jesuit from Peking, (Father Johann Adam Schall), wherein he states that he had conversed with Jews in that city who adhered to the forms of Judaism retained in the books of the Old

Testament. They were totally ignorant of the death of Jesus Christ and had expressed a wish to appoint the Jesuit Father their Kakan (Hazan) if he would abstain from swine's flesh (pork)."

### Lost Tribes in Japan

It cannot be said precisely as to when Jews arrived in Japan. It is said that a number of Jewish silk merchants came to Japan from China in the 2nd century AD. Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch Jews traded in the Far East in the sixteenth century and the Jews came in close contact with the Japanese.

Solomon Grayzel mentions in his book *A History of the Jews* that the Russian Jews had a synagogue and an organized community in Nagasaki in 1900. In addition to this group, Sephardi Jews from India and Syria enjoyed prosperity in Kobe.

Tudor Parfitt in his book *The Thirteenth Gate* states that some people believed that the Japanese are from Asia and that the Yamato clan leadership has descended from the Lost Tribes. They also believe that the tribe of Hada are a Semitic people whose origin is directly traceable to the land of Israel. Their original worship was that of the Hebrews. The Hada tribe link themselves to the Lost Tribes of Zebulun. The family crests of the Hada tribe showed sailboats similar to depictions found at the archaeological sites in Israel. It is said that even today they have folk songs where there are traces of their ancient Hebrew songs—one such song is 'Ise Ondo' connected to Miriam from Exodus 15.

The Makuya sect in Japan is Christian, but they have a strong liking for Israel and many of them have learnt the Hebrew language and have composed a Hebrew-Japanese dictionary. The Makuya take Hebrew names, observe a form of *kashrut*, observe

the Sabbath, light candles on Friday evening and follow the Hebrew prayer book 'Siddur.' According to Parfitt, they believe themselves to be one of the Lost Tribes of Israel.

Today, a large Jewish community center is situated in the Shibuya area of Tokyo and has a restaurant, swimming pool, library and a synagogue.

## The Essene Brotherhood

The Essene Brotherhood was a sect of pre-Christian Jewish monks who played a very important role in the upbringing and protection of Jesus from his childhood to his survival after crucifixion and perhaps his safe departure to India thereafter.

The Essene Brotherhood in the time of Maccabi appears under the name of 'Hasidees,' i.e. 'The Holy'—and later as the 'Esseers' or 'Essenes' to mean 'children of peace.'

The basic fundamental doctrine of the Essene Brotherhood was to love and worship God in purity of heart and to the best of their ability work to bring happiness and peace to mankind. The main dogma rested on 'God fore-ordained the fate of every man for good or for evil.'

As is known in Judea there were several religious sects at the time of Jesus—Pharisees, Sadducees, Publicans, and the Essenes; the last sect, though important, is not mentioned directly in the New Testament. Perhaps this Brotherhood lived separated from the world, not wanting any publicity.

Their existence became established with the accidental discovery of the numerous Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in the caves near their stronghold, the Qumran monastery.

A young Bedouin boy while searching for his lost sheep on the steep cliff along the Dead Sea came across the opening of a large cave. He was astonished to see several large earthen pots.



Hoping to find a treasure, he opened one of the pots but to his disappointment saw only old leather scrolls, not knowing their historical value. In the following year, archaeologists found in the area ten more caves with several scrolls which are being translated and are dated to be as old as 150 BC. Soon thereafter the discovery of the Qumran monastery about a kilometer from the spot has thrown more light on the practices and social customs of the Essenes.

The famous Jewish philosopher Josephus in his book, *De Bello Judaico*, and his *Historia Antiqua Judaica* gives details of the order of the Essenes which deserve attention. He lived both before and after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and was initiated into the Essene Brotherhood after a term of trial for three years. Josephus was of the lineage of Aaron and got tired of the rigid and frugal living of the Essenes and joined the Pharisee sect. His writing, therefore, can be considered most unbiased and authentic.

Josephus writes that the Essenes are "the most honest people in the world and are as good as their word, very industrious and enterprising and show great skill and concern for agriculture." He further states that, "they exercise justice and equality in their dealings with all people, ownership of property is common so that the rich do not consume more of their riches than the poor. They never marry and keep no servants. They consider that marriage would only create discord and rupture among the brethren and do not think it right that one should be the slave or the servant of the other as all men are brethren and God their father. They all live the same simple, industrious and frugal life. They shun and despise sensuality as a great sin and consider a moral and temperate life a great virtue and prize highly the strength of mind and the power to overcome the passions and desires of

their nature. Therefore, they subdue the sensual instinct but willingly adopt the children of other people, especially the young as they are most susceptible to teaching and discipline.

“They despise riches and worldly gain and the equality of property among them must be admired; therefore, none of them is seen to live in abundance nor in need.

“The laws of the Order regulate that everyone who enters the Brotherhood gives up to the Brotherhood all his property and wealth and therefore among them neither haughtiness nor slavish subjection is seen. They live together as brethren sharing good and evil. They do not live in any particular town; every town has a house belonging to this order where members take their abode while travelling and are supplied with all they want. Everything is here at their disposal as if in their own houses and here they are received as best friends and near relations by persons they never saw before. They never buy or sell among themselves but every member willingly gives his brother what he needs.

“The Essene worship of God is grand, sacred and majestic and before the sun rises and greets the earth with its rays, they do not speak of earthly matters, but read and send forth their sacred, humble prayers that they have learnt from their elders. After the prayer is over, the inspector points out the work in which one is most skilled. Having thus worked for five hours, they again assemble, bathe with cold water and wear white linen garb. They proceed to the special halls of the Order where no one dare come who does not belong to their Order. Having gone through the ceremonies that the law prescribes, they enter silently to the eating rooms and break their fast after saying a short prayer. This procedure is followed for the evening meal also.

“They indulge in humanitarian acts like feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, comforting the sick,

the prisoner and protecting and aiding the widows and orphans.

"They never let themselves be overcome by anger, hatred, vengeance or ill will; they study with perseverance ancient writings and they have profound knowledge of the art of healing and are acquainted with the medicinal herbs and plants.

"Any one who wishes to be admitted to the Brotherhood has to undergo one year of rigid trial. If he proves himself worthy he is provided with a spade, an apron and white garb.

"The Essenes say that during the worldly life the spirit is chained to the body like a prisoner in his cell, but when these chains burst by wear and decay then the spirit is freed from the bodily prison and already tasting the heavenly bliss, it soars up to the bright kingdom of joy and peace."

The Essenes had to take a sacred oath never to divulge any of the secrets of their Order to anybody who did not belong to it.

According to their moral standing and ability, they were divided into four classes or degrees. In the first degree were specially adopted children. The brethren had their special signs and thereby recognized each other when they met. These signs include: a certain movement of the right hand, a grip, the brotherly kiss and the words of salutation 'peace be with you my brethren.'

It is said that Freemasonry today is the product of this ancient Essene Brotherhood.

Many scholars point to the striking affinity in the organization, worship and social structure of the Qumran Essenes (or the Jerusalem Essenes) and the Primitive Church.

Gaalys Cornfield writes in his book *The Historical Jesus*, "It is known that the Church emerged from Jerusalem and the first Christians were Jews, as were Jesus and his twelve Apostles. The Book of Acts (2, 46-47:3) describes how the first adherents

of the Primitive Church of Jerusalem worshipped frequently at the Temple, observing the Mosaic Law and other Jewish observances."

Cornfield further states that, "during the first century (upto the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD) Mount Zion was the most important center of early Christian life. While Antioch became the center of the Church of the Gentiles, Jerusalem remained the center of the Judaeo-Christians. They kept their Jewish identity even after the two terrible cataclysms that had visited the Jewish nation, the first in 70 AD and the second in 135 AD under Bar-Kochba. Upto 135 AD the bishops of Jerusalem were all of Jewish descent."

The evolution of Christianity through the Roman Empire which adopted the religion of the vanquished obliged the Primitive Church to reverse its attitude to Judaism.

In the increasingly tolerant world today, world religious leaders endeavor to bring mankind closer to a common platform to save the future which is threatened by destructive forces never known in the past.

One such step was taken by His Holiness Pope John Paul II who prayed in 1986 with the Jewish community in Rome's main synagogue in a gesture without precedent in the 2000-year history of the Catholic Church (*The Times of India*, April 13, 1986).



## Life of Jesus and Mystery of His Travel to India

The Bible narrates that in the village of Nazareth in Galilee, there lived the simple and God fearing Jewish family of Joseph and his wife Miriam (Mary).

Jesus was born in Bethlehem near Jerusalem in about 4 BC. His name was Joshua, which in Hebrew is Yehoshua. 'Yeho' stands for 'Yahweh' and 'shua' means 'will redeem;' that is, Jesus as redeemer. In Greek his name was 'Yayzous' (Jesus). He was the eldest of five brothers and two sisters. His father Joseph traced his lineage to King David.

At the age of twelve he was taken by his parents to Jerusalem. In the Holy Temple, he may have been influenced by the teachings of the great Rabbi Hillel who had passed away ten years before his birth. The impact of Rabbi Hillel's teachings must have been substantial, for he was President of the Sanhedrin for forty years and died about sixty years before the destruction of the Holy Temple by Titus. Jesus may have drawn inspiration from the preachings of Rabbi Hillel as can be observed between the similarities in his preachings and those of Hillel.

The fundamental principle of Mosaic religion, explained Hillel,

"That which is hateful unto thee, do not unto thy neighbor".

Further, he emphasized humility and simplicity: "Be not be dressed among the naked, and naked among the dressed. Take thy seat below thy rank."

The wisdom of Jesus was noticed by the elders in his early childhood. It was the Jewish custom those days that a young man at thirteen should get married. Jesus being ambitious left his home and was seen in the company of wise people. Thereafter, nothing is mentioned either in the Bible or the Talmud about his absence of about seventeen years until such time as he is again seen in Israel at the age of thirty.

Luke says,

"And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit and was in the desert till the day of his showing unto Israel. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor of God and Man."

Luke probably refers to the Essene Group of Jewish monks who lived in the desert away from towns and cities.

Jesus reappears in Israel after an absence of nearly seventeen years. Nothing is mentioned in the Bible of this long absence. He preaches hardly for three years when he is crucified. This cannot be the end of this great prophet; his mission was not over. He was ordained to preach and destined to travel to distant lands in search of the "Lost Tribes and bring them back into the fold." "I was sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel and them alone." (Matt. 15: 24)

When Jesus sent out his twelve Apostles to preach in different regions, the following instructions appear in Matthew 10: 5-6: "Do not take the road to the gentile lands, and do not enter any Samaritan town; but go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel."

### **Jesus Returns and Survives Crucifixion**

When Jesus returns to the Holy land at the age of 30, after an absence of nearly seventeen years, people question him, "Who are you and what is the country of your origin? We have not heard of you and know not even your name."

"I am an Israelite," Jesus replies, "and on the day of my birth I saw the walls of Jerusalem and heard the sobs of my enslaved brothers and the wails of my sisters condemned to live among the heathens."

After seventeen years of travel in the East and study of the philosophy of truth, Jesus had gained maturity, a radiant personality and a fertile colorful imagination. He was seen preaching in synagogues, spoke in parables rich with spiritual meaning. His ethical ideals were ascetic and unworldly like the Essenes. He was travelling from place to place and this brought him in contact with the masses. He sympathized with the poor Jews living in the villages who could not be as observant of the religious practices as those in the cities.

"Do not suppose that I have come to abolish the Law (of Moses) and the prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to complete it. I tell you this so long as heaven and earth endure, not a letter, not a stroke, will disappear from the Law." (Matt. 5: 17 and 18).

Further he emphasized that clean living was more important than keeping of religious rituals.

He was not impressed by the grandeur of the Holy Temple. "Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left here one stone upon another which shall not be thrown down."

He had arguments with the priests. "Woe unto ye, Scribes and Pharisees," he exclaimed, "hypocrites, for you tithe mint and anise and cumin and leave undone the weightier matters of

the law, judgement, mercy and truth; but those ye ought to have done and not to have left the other undone. You blind guides, which strain out the gnat and swallow the camel, woe unto you."

This angered the Jews and the orthodox objected to his liberal views on healing the sick on Sabbath. "Will you wait for Sabbath to be over to rescue a sheep that has fallen in a well," he said.

Basically, otherwise, Jesus had no quarrel with Judaism; he praised the Mosaic Law, but made it more broad-based and liberal, fulfilled the Commandments, and followed the teachings of Rabbi Hillel. Both Hillel and Jesus were of one blood—the race of David.

The masses were inspired by his sermons and were attracted to him. This popularity of Jesus and his activities were, however, viewed by Caiaphas, the High Priest of the Holy Temple, as a potential danger to his position of power and wealth. Jesus brought his criticisms and arguments to a climax by a sensational act.

During the time of Passover, Jerusalem used to be thronged with pilgrims from every corner. Jesus with a crowd of disciples entered the Holy Temple and saw in the outer court booths where vendors were selling doves, pigeons, animals and a large number of money changers busy changing currency of those who came from afar. Himself being an 'Essene,' a class of men who led a life of austerity, who revolted against animal and bird sacrifice, Jesus considered the shouts of the vendors, their bickering and bargaining—the very commercial atmosphere in the House of the Lord—most vulgar and offensive. With the aid of his disciples, he drove the vendors out of the court and overturned the tables of the money changers.

Seeing this spectacle of violence, the priests were outraged and the High Priest Caiaphas was alarmed at the leadership of



Jesus and open criticism of his authority. Caiaphas handed him over to Pontius Pilot, the Roman Governor of Israel, saying "Try him; he declares himself 'King of Jews'."

During the trial, Pontius Pilot, in the seat of judgement, received a message from his wife saying, "Have thou nothing to do with this holy man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." (Matt. 27: 10).

The trial was prolonged late on that Friday and Pontius ordered Jesus along with the other two robbers to be crucified. As per the Roman custom, crucifixion was done by nailing the hands on a wooden cross and the name of the condemned man was placed on the cross. Jesus' board read 'Jesus of Nazarene, King of Jews.' (INRI).

"Oh God, why have you forsaken me" was the last cry of Jesus before he lay unconscious on the cross.

This great prophet, redeemer of the downtrodden, who preached the justice of man, was not destined to die on the cross. His God had not forsaken him; his mission to go in search of the 'Lost Sheep of Israel' had to be fulfilled.

It seems Jesus was on the cross for just about six hours. It was against the Jewish law to keep a body on the cross after the start of Sabbath.

The Centurion appointed by Pontius Pilot to execute the order of crucifixion showed sympathy for Jesus. The two robbers who were put on the cross along with Jesus were still alive and their legs were broken as per the Roman custom. Jesus's legs were not broken and his body (apparently in a swoon) was handed over on the orders of Pontius Pilot to the rich man of the village, named Joseph of Arimathea. He was a member of the Sanhedrin and follower of Jesus in secret.

Jesus' body was not buried but was carefully placed in a

large cave. Nicodemus, who was a physician of repute, brought herbal and other medicines and applied them on the body of Jesus.

The Gospels say Jesus was not seen in the cave on Sunday morning, but appeared to Mary Magdalene as a gardener and then to his disciples in secret. When they thought a ghost of Jesus was before them, he said, "Look at my hands and feet. It is myself. Touch me and see; no ghost has flesh and bones as you can see that I have." They were still unconvinced, still wondering, for it seemed too good to be true. And so he asked them, "Have you anything here to eat?" And they gave him a piece of fish they had cooked which he took and ate before their eyes. (Luke 24: 36-43).

### **An 'Eye-Witness' Account of the Crucifixion**

A leather parchment was discovered in Alexandria, written by a highly esteemed leader of the Essene Brotherhood in Jerusalem to the leader in Alexandria. This letter was written just about seven years after the crucifixion. The letter<sup>1</sup> states that the Essene Brotherhood in Alexandria received rumors that Jesus survived crucifixion and they were eager to know the truth. The leader wrote a letter to their group in Jerusalem to give them details of the crucifixion. They received a reply from their Brotherhood in Jerusalem, the author who was a friend of Joseph

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1. *The Crucifixion by an Eye-Witness* was first printed in 1873 and later again in 1907 by the Indo-American Book Co., Chicago and was reprinted in 1977 by Syed Abdul Hayee, P. 117, Guberg III, Lahore, Pakistan. It states that "a member of the Abyssinian Mercantile Company discovered in an ancient house, formerly occupied by Grecian friars an old leather parchment written in Latin. Archaeological discoveries indicated that the house was owned and occupied by Essenes."

of Arimathea and a member of the Sanhedrin, assuring his group in Alexandria saying, "I tell you only of the things I know and I have seen it all with my own eyes and have taken a deep interest and an active part in all these events. And you know an Essene permits his lips to give only the strictest 'TRUTH'."

The letter states that when Jesus was put on the cross, darkness descended on earth and in the night when he was placed in the cave there was an earthquake. The letter further mentions of the active role played by Joseph of Arimathea to render all possible assistance to save Jesus. His physician friend Nicodemus examined the body of Jesus on the cross and assured Joseph that it was possible to save Jesus.

The letter makes an important statement. "After this they drove through his hands thick iron nails, but none through his feet, for this was not customary. I noted this particularly, my dear Brethren, inasmuch as it has been rumored that he was nailed through both his hands and his feet."

His feet were perhaps supported on a wooden block. If his feet were nailed, Jesus would not have been able to walk just within three days after crucifixion.

Nicodemus hastened to see that the bones of Jesus were not broken and asked Joseph to immediately use his influence and request Pontius Pilot to hand over the body of Jesus from the cross to him.

The letter further adds, "The Centurion was friendly to me and ordered the soldiers not to break the bones of Jesus for he is dead."

"To be more sure, one of the soldiers struck his spear into the body in such a manner that it passed over the hip and into the side. From there flowed blood and water and my hope revived."

Nicodemus hurried with his medical treatment as soon as the body was handed over to them. He spread strong spices and healing salves on long pieces of 'byssns' to restore consciousness.

The body was then laid in the cave which was smoked with *aloe* and other strengthening herbs and a large stone was placed at the entrance so that the vapors might fill up the grotto.

Joseph and Nicodemus were seen bending over Jesus' face and they blew into him their own breath and warmed his temples. (Mouth to mouth respiration as is recommended by doctors today to revive the heart beat.)

Thirty hours had now passed since the assumed death of Jesus. And when the Essene brother having heard a slight noise within the grotto went in he saw with great excitement that the lips and the body moved and that it breathed. Jesus' face assumed a living appearance and his eyes opened. And as Jesus recognized his Essene friends, his eyes sparkled with joy, and he sat up asking, "Where am I?" Then Joseph embraced him, folded him in his arms and explained what had happened.

Nicodemus urged Jesus to take some refreshment and he ate some dates and bread dipped in honey. And Nicodemus gave him wine to drink after which Jesus was greatly refreshed so that he raised himself up.

After this he became conscious of the wounds in his hands and in his side. The balsam which Nicodemus had spread upon the injured parts had a soothing effect, and healing had commenced.

The letter further narrates that the Essene friends took all precautions and care for his safety so that he was able to meet his disciples in Jerusalem, the valley at Messeda, in the house of Lazarus in Bethania, Galilee and Mount Karmel and other places to deliver sermons to unite them in their doctrine and



work. His speeches and the news that he was killed caused a great stir among the people.

And Joseph spoke to Jesus saying, "Knowest thou that the people who do not altogether understand your doctrine are meditating to proclaim you worldly king to overthrow the Romans? But you must not disturb the kingdom of God through war and revolution. Therefore, choose the solitude, live with the Essene friends and be in safety that your doctrine may be proclaimed by your disciples." And Jesus consented that he would go into solitude.

The letter further states that the last time Jesus met his disciples was near the summit of Mount Olive from where one can see the beautiful valley of Jerusalem. For, Jesus longed once more to look upon the country where he had lived and worked. He prayed for friends he was about to leave, and lifting his arms he blessed them after which he hastily went away through the gathering mist.

In the city there arose a rumor that Jesus was taken up in a cloud and had gone to heaven. This was invented by the people who had not been present when Jesus disappeared. The disciples did not contradict the rumor inasmuch as it served to strengthen their faith and influenced the people who wanted a miracle to happen.

### THE HOLY SHROUD OF TURIN

This historic piece of cloth, 14 feet long and 4 feet wide is believed to have been wrapped around the body of Jesus when he was taken down from the cross and later placed in the cave.

Impressions of blood marks are seen and photographs taken by special sophisticated cameras give many clues that Jesus was alive when taken down from the cross and show an outline of

the face and body of Jesus. The double marks on the cloth indicate that one half of the cloth was wrapped around the body of Jesus and the other half was wrapped over his head. The ointment (*Marham-i-Issa*)<sup>2</sup> applied on Jesus' body and the body heat reproduced impressions of Jesus' body on this cloth. The blood marks on the cloth are the impressions of fresh blood from his body. Guiseppa Euric took photographs of the cloth with the help of powerful bulbs when it was displayed in 1931. The pictures taken show the face of Jesus and the blood marks where the hands were nailed. The shroud has some burn marks due to fire. It was kept folded in forty eight layers in a silver box in the chapel of Chambery, France. A fire broke out in the church in 1532, the silver box got partially melted and a part of the shroud got charred.

Dr. Max Frei, a criminologist of Switzerland carried out research and detected with the help of an electron microscope fifty types of pollen of plants generally found in the land where the shroud was kept from time to time. Some pollen is of plants only to be found in the desert country surrounding the Dead Sea where the soil has a very high salt content.

In 1969, a commission of scientists was appointed to carry out scientific investigations of the shroud. Specialists have said that Jesus would not have been dead when he was taken down from the cross. This was based on the theory that the dead body could not have continued to bleed the way it is indicated on the shroud that the body was bleeding. Several reports have appeared

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2. *Marham-i-Issa* (the ointment of Jesus) contained white wax, gum gugal (also known as *Balsamo Dendron Mukul*), *Aristoelchia longa*, rasin *pinuslongifolia*, gum ammonicum, *plumbi oxidum*, myrrh, galbanum, subacetate of copper, *olibanum*, rasin and olive oil.

in the press and the latest on January 1, 1988 (*The Times of India*) has stated that scientists may be able to establish the date of this holy shroud of Turin by the end of 1988 after hundreds of years of controversy over its authenticity. The British Museum said that scientists at Radio Carbon Dating Laboratories in three countries are working together to try to establish the date of the shroud.

A thorough scientific investigation can yield the age of the shroud and many aspects of the crucifixion.

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## Jesus and Thomas Go to India

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It was not desirable for Jesus to remain in Palestine after the crucifixion since he would have been detected by the Romans. He could not have gone to Egypt because Romans were ruling there, though there was a large Jewish community in Egypt; Alexandria alone had over 100,000 Jews. With the help of the Essene elders, he may have planned to go to India where he could recoup his health and preach among the Lost Tribes in Kashmir and beyond.



Every member of the Essene Brotherhood had to take an oath to keep complete secrecy of all discussion and orders. Jesus, therefore, as a member had to keep his travel plans after the crucifixion secret and, out of desperation, ordered his trusted disciple Thomas to go to India.

A road journey could have been hazardous to Jesus due to his wounds of crucifixion and as such he may have boarded the ship of merchant Habban. It is not known whether Thomas and Jesus were sailing separately or together to reach Sandaruk, an ancient port somewhere to the north of Karachi.

After attending a wedding feast of the king's daughter and blessing the married couple, they may have gone by road from Sandaruk to Rawalpindi (Taxila) to the court of King Gondaphorus.

Details of this apocryphal ancient book and excerpts from the same are given to appreciate the historical value of the record.

### **The Acts of Judas Thomas**

Evidence of the truth of Jesus' travel to India after the crucifixion is given in the ancient book *The Acts of Judas Thomas*.

The original text of *The Acts of Judas Thomas* is an apocryphal work written sometime at the beginning of Christianity in Edessa (180-230 A.D). The meaning of the word 'apocrypha' in Greek means 'hidden.' The apocryphal writings were considered so important and precious that they must be hidden from the general public and reserved for the initiates—the inner circle of believers.

The New Testament contains four gospels which have been named after Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They are a random selection from among a great number of gospels that were used in the various communities and sects of early Christianity. The

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rejected texts were also called 'apocryphal' and many of these were destroyed.

The author of the *The Acts of Judas Thomas* is not known but some scholars say it was either Barde Sanes or one of his disciples. In *The Acts of Judas Thomas*, the mission of St. Thomas in India is extensively recorded and there is a reference to King Gondaphorus. In addition to *The Acts of Judas Thomas*, the name of King Gondaphorus is seen on ancient coins discovered in the 19th century. Archaeological discoveries prove that Gondaphorus succeeded Azes to the throne of Indo-Parthia in 19 AD. With these discoveries, the Church does not condemn the historical value of *The Acts of Judas Thomas*.

A short excerpt from *The Acts of Judas Thomas* is reproduced below.

"And when all the apostles had been for a time in Jerusalem—Simon, Orphas and Andrew, and Jacob and John, and Philip and Bartholomew and Thomas and Matthew the publican, and Jacob the son of Alphsus, and Simon the Kananite, and Judas the son of Jacob—they divided the countries among them, in order that each one of them might preach in the region which fell to him and in the place to which the Lord sent him. India fell by lot and division to Judas Thomas the Apostle, and he was not willing to go, saying, 'I have not strength enough for this because I am weak. And I am a Hebrew; how can I teach the Indians?' And whilst Judas was reasoning thus, our Lord appeared to him in a vision of the night, and said to him, 'Fear not, Thomas, because my grace is with thee.' But he would not be persuaded at all, saying, 'Whithersoever Thou wilt, our Lord, send me, only to India I will not go.'

"And as Judas was reasoning thus, a certain merchant, an Indian, happened to come whose name was Habban: and he was



sent by King Gudnaphar (Gondaphorus), that he might bring to him a skilful carpenter. And our Lord saw him walking in the street, and said to him, 'Thou wishest to buy a carpenter.' He saith to him, 'Yes.' Our Lord saith to him, 'I have a slave, a carpenter, whom I will sell to thee.' And he showed him Thomas at a distance, and bargained with him for twenty pieces of silver as his price, and wrote a bill of sale thus:

'I, Jesus, son of Joseph the carpenter, from the village of Bethlehem, which is in Judea, acknowledge that I have sold my slave Judas Thomas to Habban, the merchant of King Gudnaphar.'

"And when they had completed this bill of sale, Jesus took Judas, and went to Habban the merchant. And Habban saw him, and said to him, 'Is this thy master?' Judas said to him, 'Yes, he is my master.' Habban the merchant saith to him, 'He sold thee to me outright.' And Judas was silent.

"And in the morning he arose and prayed, and entreated of his Lord, and said to him, 'Lo, our Lord, as Thou wilt, let thy will be done.' And he went to Habban the merchant, without carrying anything with him except that price of his, for our Lord had given it to him. And Judas went and found Habban the merchant carrying his goods on board the ship, and began to carry them on board with him. And when they had gone on board and sat down, Habban the merchant saith to Judas, 'What is thy art which thou art skilled in practising?' Judas saith to him, 'Carpentry and architecture—the business of the carpenter.' Habban the merchant saith to him, 'What dost thou know to make in wood, and what in hewn stone?' Judas saith to him, 'In wood I have learned to make ploughs and yokes and oxgoads, and oars for ferry-boats, and masts for ships; and in

stone, tombstones and monuments and temples and palaces for kings.' Habban the merchant saith to him, 'And I was seeking just such an artificer.' And they began to sail because the breeze was steady; and they were sailing along gently, until they put in at the town of Sandaruk.

"There was singing and rejoicing in the city because the daughter of the king was getting married. Messengers were loudly inviting both citizens and strangers, rich and poor, to come to the feast. The merchant Habban tells Thomas after resting for a while, 'Let us go that we may not be spoken ill of by the king; especially when we are strangers here.' It is further mentioned that while all were eating and drinking, Judas Thomas was singing and praising God. Nobody could understand the meaning of the songs Judas was singing except the flute girl in the banquet hall who could understand everything, because she was a Hebrew woman."

The king, it is mentioned, asked Judas Thomas to bless his newly married daughter and accordingly he goes to the bridal chamber, says prayer and blesses the bride and bridegroom and goes out of the bridal chamber. And on the request of the king when all the groomsmen had gone out of the bridal chamber and the door was closed, "the bridegroom raised the curtain that he may bring the bride to himself, and he saw our Lord (Jesus who resembled Judas) standing and talking with the bride. And the bridegroom said to him, 'Lo, thou didst go out and how art thou still here?' Our Lord said to him 'I am not Judas, but I am the brother of Judas.' And our Lord sat down on the bed and let the young couple sit on the chairs.

This indicates that after the meeting in Sandaruk, Jesus and Thomas were in Taxila and Jesus proceeded further to Kashmir—his second visit to India.

It may be presumed on the basis of these two acts narrated in *The Acts of Judas Thomas* that the kingdom of King Gondaphorus covered south India also and the king wanted a palace built in the south, where he used to go from the north after a long interval of time.

Thomas, it is recorded, travelled extensively in the south, in the kingdom of King Mazdai, to preach, convert and ultimately die as a martyr at Mylapore near Madras.<sup>1</sup>

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1. It is said that the mother of Jesus was with him during his second visit to India. She could not stand the hazards of the long journey and died at Murree (Pakistan). A tomb exists near the Pindi Point known as 'Mai Marie-Asthan.'

## **The Buddhist Scrolls: Discovery of Nicholas Notovitch**

A brief description of the travel and discovery of Nicholas Notovitch is given here since this partly answers many questions regarding the Lost Tribes dispersed in the East.

Nicholas Notovitch, a Russian traveller, discovered in 1887 a Buddhist manuscript in the Hemis monastery at Leh in Ladakh. This important discovery reveals that Jesus left Jerusalem at the age of twelve and in the company of merchants travelled to India. The Bible and the Talmud are silent about the absence of Jesus in Judea from the age of 13 to 29.

Swami Abhedananda of the Ramakrishna Mission also saw the Buddhist scrolls in the Hemis monastery when he went to Kashmir and Tibet in 1922 on his return from USA. Chapters IV, V and VI reproduced in the Annex to this book are from his *Kashmir-O-Tibbete*.

Prof. Roerick, another Russian traveller, visited Hemis monastery in 1925 along with his son George who was proficient in the Tibetan language in addition to Sanskrit and Chinese. Thereafter, in 1939, Madam Caspari and her husband Charles, along with Mrs Clarence Gasque, went to Hemis in the course of their pilgrimage to Mount Kailash. One of the monks brought from the library a bundle of Buddhist manuscripts, unwrapped it and



with great respect showed them, saying, "Your Jesus is in these books."

Madam Caspari took a picture of the monk displaying the book but the photograph is not clear enough to be sufficiently enlarged to decipher the text. The photographs taken by Nicholas Notovitch were destroyed due to the utter negligence of his servant, who opened the box containing all the negatives.

The fourteen chapters translated from these Buddhist scrolls narrate the history of the Hebrew race—their enslavement by the Egyptian Pharaohs and deliverance by Moses—as well as describe the sensational evidence of the presence of Jesus in India. Chapter III describes how the Israelites forgot their God, and strangers invaded their land and carried their inhabitants into captivity in far-off lands. Chapter IV makes mention of the great Prophet Issa, his birth, his leaving Palestine in a caravan and coming to the land of the great Buddha. Chapter V mentions that Jesus spent six years in Jagannath Puri, Rajgir, Benaras and other holy cities in India and learnt from the Brahmins the Pali language, the Vedas and other holy scriptures. When Jesus observed the caste system where the Sudras were forbidden to attend the reading of the Vedas, he strongly criticized the Brahmins for depriving the lower castes of learning and knowledge and said, "God, our Father, makes no difference between any of his children, all of whom he loves equally."

Chapters VI, VII and VIII describe how his criticism of the caste system angered the Brahmins who planned to kill him. Jesus, therefore, departed from Jagannath Puri and went to Nepal and from there back to the land of the Hebrews.

Swami Prajnanananda of Ramakrishna Vedantamath has written in his introduction to the 1981 reprint of the book *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*:

“Swami Abhedananda also saw the same manuscript on the life of Jesus in the Hemis monastery, when he went to Kashmir and Tibet in 1922, after his return from the West, and has mentioned this fact in his Bengali book *Kashmere-O-Tibbate*, giving a Bengali translation of the portions which contain the unknown life of Jesus in India. He has also mentioned this incident in his lecture, *Was Christ a Yogi?* which has been quoted verbatim in the book: *The Adept of Galilee*, published both from America and London, in 1920. There it has been clearly discussed: ‘But it will immediately be asked, how did Jesus come to learn Yoga Vidya when there is no evidence of the fact that he ever visited India?’ And here we are confronted with the absence of knowledge covering research on the subject, beyond the narratives to be found in the New Testament; for, as we shall see later, although it matters not whether he went to India or not, yet there are two documents set before the public, which state this to be the case. And the first is *The Gospel of the Holy Twelve*, which purports to be one of the most ancient and complete of early Christian fragments preserved in a monastery of the Buddhist monks in Tibet, where it was hidden by some of the Essene community for safety from the hands of corrupters, while another is the *Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*, discovered also in a monastery, by a Russian named Notovitch, while travelling in India. Certainly it was known to exist in Egypt, and as the New Testament writers are silent respecting the doings and whereabouts of Jesus from his 12th to his 30th years of age it is more than probable, taking everything into account, that he journeyed in search of knowledge and having passed his final initiation at about the age of

30, returned in order to undertake his great mission in Palestine.”<sup>1</sup>

### Jesus and His Unknown Life

Nicholas Notovitch visited India in 1887, “an admirable country,” as he says, “which had attracted me from my early childhood.”

In the course of his conversation at the Mulbek monastery, Notovitch was told by an elderly Lama that they had in their books the great prophet ‘Issa.’ He further narrated that “Issa is a great prophet, one of the first after the twenty-two Buddhas. His name and his acts have been chronicled in our sacred writings and when reading how his great life passed away in the midst of an erring people, we weep for the horrible sin of the heathen who murdered him after subjecting him to torture.”

Notovitch was told by the Lama that he could see the scrolls relating to Issa in the Hemis monastery near Leh.<sup>2</sup> Notovitch was lucky to be shown these manuscripts in the Hemis monastery. With the help of his interpreter, he translated the same and desired to publish them on his return to Europe.

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1. Stories of Issa in Kashmir have been related by Mrs. Harvey in her book *The Adventures of a Lady in Tartary, China and Kashmir* (vol. II, p. 136). Another book which mentions Issa is *In the Attic of the World* (1931) by Lady Henrietta Merrick.

2. The author's efforts to locate these Buddhist scrolls recording Jesus' visit to India have been fruitless. His doctor friend writes, “the chief priest—Lama—of Hemis has no knowledge about the scrolls and even the older monks do not know about such things. However, they say that there are very precious and wonderful things in the ‘archives’ of the monastery which always remain under several locks and ordinarily no one can open them to see the things.”

On reaching Russia, Notovitch showed his notes to Mgr. Platon, the Metropolitan of Kiev, who dissuaded Notovitch from publishing them. Thereafter, in Rome, he showed his manuscript to a cardinal who was close to the Holy Father. He, too, did not like to give publicity to these notes, saying, "What good will it do to print these notes? Nobody will attach to them any great importance and you will create a number of enemies." The cardinal, however, disclosed that the unknown life of Jesus Christ is no novelty to the Roman Church. The Vatican library possesses 63 complete or incomplete manuscripts in various Oriental languages referring to this matter which have been brought to Rome by missionaries from India, China, Egypt and Arabia. The cardinal offered to give Notovitch a reward for his notes to compensate him for the time and money spent on his expedition but Notovitch refused.

Notovitch met Cardinal Rotelli in Paris, who too was opposed to publishing his notes. "The Church," he said, "suffers already too much from the new current of atheistic ideas, and you will but give a new food to the calumniators and detractors of the evangelical doctrine. I tell you this in the interest of all the Christian Churches."

Thereafter, Notovitch met Mr. Jules Simon who found the manuscript very interesting and left it to the discretion of Notovitch to publish the same. Notovitch published a book in French in 1894, *La vie inconnue de Jesus Christ*, translated in English as *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*.

While this sensational discovery attracted the attention of many thinkers, protests and criticisms were expressed by many scholars on the appearance of this book. Notovitch in reply said, "I wish to add that before criticising my communications, the societies of savants can, without much expense, equip a scientific



expedition having as its mission the study of those manuscripts in the place where I discovered them, and so may easily verify their historic value."

Some scholars stated that Notovitch never set foot in Tibet and that the entire story was imaginary. Notovitch defended himself in his letter to the publishers, an excerpt of which is given below:

May not this resurrection of books which have been buried under the dust of secular ages be the starting point of a new science which should be fertile in unforeseen and unimaginable results?

These are the questions which are raised by my book. Criticism would do itself honor by examining them seriously. The subject is well worth the trouble. It contains all the problems which agitate humanity. I am convinced that research would not be fruitless. I gave the first blow with a pickaxe and revealed the hidden treasure, but I have reasons for believing that the mine is inexhaustible.

It is no longer today as it was in those past centuries when one class of men alone were depositories of integral Truth and dispensed to the masses their share of indivisible property, each one according to his needs. Today, the world is eager for knowledge, and everyone has a right to turn a page of the book of science and to know the truth concerning the Man-God who belongs to us all.

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## Royal Prince Invites Jesus to India

The sensational discovery of the Buddhist scrolls by Nicholas Notovitch gives enough clues that at the age of fourteen Jesus came to India perhaps with the divine objective of meeting the Lost Tribes scattered in different parts of India. These were in fact the lost sheep of Israel who had given up their ancestral faith and had adopted Buddhism. Another less publicized book is *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ* by Levy Dowling.<sup>1</sup> His fifteen chapters covering Jesus in India are equally fascinating and are similar to the fourteen chapters of Notovitch, except that Levy concentrates on the thought and wisdom of Jesus.

Levy did not visit India, nor the Himalayas and said that he transcribed the book in the early hours between two and six when the spirit of man is in fullest harmony with the heavenly spirit.

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1. Levy Dowling was born in 1844 in Belleville, Ohio. He was deeply involved with his work and was preaching from the early age of 16. He was pastor of a small church and entered the U.S. Army at the age of 20 as chaplain. He was a graduate of two medical colleges and practised medicine for some years, but finally retired and took interest to "build a white city." This was a vision in his early life which he said was repeated three times.

*The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ* is the building of the 'white city.' The philosophic and practical basis of the religion of the Aquarian age of the world. The book was published by De Vorss & Co. Publishers, Marina Del Rey, California 90291.

Going through the fifteen chapters of Levy, one is inclined to believe that a sacred Buddhist manuscript may have come into his possession and he transcribed the same. Perhaps he did not have the courage to disclose this fact which could have incited the wrath of his fellow Christians and, therefore, perhaps cooked up the story of heavenly inspiration.

Whatever may be the source material, the record of Jesus' life in India, his preachings and philosophy as transcribed proved that he was a genius at a very young age.

As the story goes, a royal merchant prince of Orissa, when in Jerusalem with his Brahmin priests, was captivated to hear of the wisdom of the Jewish boy in Nazareth. The prince persuaded Jesus' parents to let him go with him to India, to learn the wisdom of the East.

When in Jagannath (Puri), in the company of the Brahmin priests and Buddhist monks, Jesus was asked to define God. Jesus explained,

"God is Truth and this universal God is wisdom, will and love. The Holy Breath is Truth; is that which was, and is, and evermore shall be; it cannot change nor pass away. The God I speak of is everywhere; He cannot be encompassed within walls, nor hedged about with bounds of any kind. You Brahmins call him *Para Brahma*, in Egypt he is Thoth; and Zeus is his name in Greece; Jehovah is his Hebrew name; but everywhere He is Causeless Cause, the Rootless Root, from which all things have grown."

Jesus and the chief priest travelled through Orissa and the Ganges valley seeking wisdom. They stayed in Benares for many days—a city rich in culture and learning where Jesus learned the art of healing, using plants, earth, water, and sunshine.

For four years, Jesus stayed in the temple of Jagannath and when he observed the abhorrent practice of untouchability—found only in India—he asked the priest, “Pray, tell me all about your views of castes; why do you say that all men are not equal in the sight of God?”

The chief priest produced four men before Jesus, one white, the second red, the third yellow and the fourth black.

The chief priest explained,

“From the mouth of *Para Brahma*, the first man came; and he was white, was like the Brahma himself; a Brahmin he was called. And he was high and lifted up; he had no need to toil and he was called the priest of Brahma, the Holy One, to act for Brahma in all affairs on earth.

“The second man was red, and from the hand of *Para Brahma* he came; and he was called Shatriya. And he was made to be the king and the warrior, whose highest ordained duty was protection of the priest.

“And from the inner parts of *Para Brahma* the third man came; and he was called the Vaisya. He was a yellow man and his duty was to till the soil, and keep the flocks and herds.

“And from the feet of *Para Brahma* the fourth man came; and he was black; and he was called the Shudra, one of low caste. The Shudra is the servant of the race of men; he has no rights that others need respect; he may not hear nor read the Vedas (prayer) and it means death to him to look into the face of the king, and naught but death can free him from his state of servitude.”

And Jesus said “Then *Para Brahma* is not a god of justice and of right; for with his own strong hand he has exalted one and brought another low.”

Looking up to the heavens, Jesus said, “My Father-God,



who was, and who is, and evermore shall be; thou holds within thy hands the scales of justice and of right; who in the boundlessness of love has made all men to equal be. The white, the black, the yellow and the red can look up in thy face and say, Our Father-God."

This criticism of the caste system angered the Brahmins and they planned to kill Jesus. The Buddhist priests protected him and sent him to Kapilavastu in Nepal.

When in the temple of Kapilavastu, the chief priest addressed the congregation,

"We stand today upon a crest of time. Six times ago a master soul was born (Buddha) who gave a glorious light to man and now a master sage stands here in the temple of Kapilavastu.

"This Hebrew prophet is the rising star of wisdom, deified. He brings to us knowledge of the secret things of God and all the world will hear his words, will heed the words and glorify his name.

"Listen when he speaks; he is the living oracle of God."

This young Hebrew boy travelled from place to place and preached. He had discourses with the Buddhist priests on the needs of men and nations, about the sacred doctrines, forms and rites best suited to the coming age.

Jesus said, "The coming age will surely not require priests, and shrines, and sacrifice of life. There is no power in the sacrifice of beast or bird, to help a man to holy life. The Holy One requires man to give his life in willing sacrifice for men, and all the so-called offerings on altars and on shrines that have been made since time began; for man can never save himself except by losing his life in saving other men.

"And in the coming age the great religion you shall introduce to men shall consist of simple rites of washings and remembran-

ces but God does not require the cruel sacrifice of animals and birds."<sup>2</sup>

And Jesus further said, "Our God must loathe the tinselled show of priests, will not the coming age demand the complete destruction of the priestly caste as well as every other caste and inequality among the sons of men?"

One day, when Jesus was by the river Ganges, a caravan returning to India from the West stopped and Jesus was given the sad news that his father was no more. And they said that Jesus's mother was in great grief and wondered whether Jesus was alive or not. She longed to see him.

Jesus wrote a letter to his mother—briefly, it stated:

My mother, noblest of womankind; a man just arrived from my native country, has brought me a tidings that Father is no more in flesh, and that you are in great grief.

My mother, all is well; is well for father and is well for you.

His work in this earth round is done, and it is done in a noble way. In all the walks of life men cannot charge him with deceit, dishonesty, nor wrong intent.

Here in this round he finished many heavy tasks, and he has gone from hence, prepared to solve the problems of the round of soul. Our Father-God is with him there, as he was with him here and there his angel guards his footsteps, lest he goes astray.

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2. "Your countless sacrifices, what are they to me? says the Lord . . . I have no desire for the blood of bulls, of sheep and of he-goats." (Isaiah 1: 11).

Why should you weep? Tears cannot conquer grief. There is no power in grief to mend a broken heart.

Yours is a ministry of love and all the world is calling out for love. Then let the past go with the past; rise from the cares of carnal things and give your life for those who live.

And if you lose your life in serving life, you will be sure to find in it the morning sun, the evening dew, in song of bird, in flowers, and in the stars of night.

In just a little while your problems of this earth-round will be solved; and when your sums are all worked out it will be pleasure unalloyed for you to enter wider fields of usefulness, to solve the greater problems of the soul.

Strive, then, to be content, and I will come to you some day and bring you richer gifts than gold or precious stones.

I'm sure that John will care for you, supplying all your needs; and I am with you all the way—Jehoshua.

On his return journey from India to Judea, while passing through Persia, Jesus explained the art of yoga to the magis. These three wise men, now very old, had seen Jesus twenty four years earlier in Jerusalem. They asked him to tell them from whence his wisdom came.

Jesus explained, "There is a silence where the soul may meet its God, and there is the fountain of wisdom. All who enter are immersed in light and filled with wisdom, love and power."

He further described, "The silence is not circumscribed, it is not a place closed in with wall, or rocky cliffs, nor guarded

by the sword of man.

"It matters not where men abide, on mountaintop, in deepest vale, in market places or in the quiet home; they may at once at any time fling wide the door and find silence, find the house of God, it is within the soul.

"The silence is the kingdom of the soul which is not seen by the human eye. When in silence, phantom forms may flit before the mind, but they are all subservient to the will; the master soul may speak and they are all gone.

"And you must lay aside all tension of the mind, all business cares, all fears, all doubts and troubled thoughts. Your human will must be absolved by the divine; then you will come into a consciousness of holiness.

"You are then within the Holy Place and you will see upon a living shrine the candle of the Lord aflame. And when you see the candles all aflame, must look and you will see with eyes of soul, the waters of the fountain of wisdom rushing on; and you may drink and abide there."



## The Lost Tribes and Buddhism

It is no easy task to trace the Lost Tribes dispersed nearly 3000 years ago and their possible contact with Buddhism. Close similarity is observed in the religious doctrine and rituals of Buddhism, the Essenes and Christianity. The Lost Tribes may have been attracted to the Buddhist philosophy which emphasizes brotherhood of mankind, peace and the oneness of the universe.

Sensing the whereabouts of these Lost Tribes, Jesus sent the twelve disciples out with the following instructions:

“Do not take the road to the Gentile lands, and not enter any Samaritan town; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

The Jesuit Fathers, Grueber and Dorville, who were among the earliest travellers in Tibet, returned from China via Tibet in 1661 AD—about 400 years after Marco Polo passed through Tibet. They have written about the similarity they noticed in the doctrine as also the rituals of the Buddhists to those of their Romish faith.

Grueber noticed that the dress of the Lamas resembled the dress of the Apostles. The discipline of the Buddhist monasteries and the different orders of the Lamas bore the same resemblance to the Romish Church. Grueber observed that the Lamas made sufferages, alms, prayers and sacrifices for the dead like the

Roman Catholics. The notion of incarnation was common to both, as also the belief in paradise and purgatory. The Buddhist Lamas had convents filled with nearly 30,000 monks and friars near Lhasa. They made their vows of poverty, obedience and chastity like Roman monks. The Lamas had confessors licensed by the Superior Lamas who were empowered to receive confessions and to impose penances.

It is interesting to note that in the life of the Buddha, many details coincide with the life of Jesus.

Sakyamuni (the Buddha), it is believed, came from heaven, was born of a virgin, welcomed by angels, received by an old saint who was endowed with prophetic vision.

There are many common phrases in the Psalms of David and the Psalms chanted by the Buddhist monks.<sup>1</sup>

The priests and congregation sing alternate verses in honor of Godama praising him as the Savior from sin; thus imitating the character in which the Messiah is predicted in the Psalms and some parts of the Old Testament.

Priest: "The Illuminator of the world has arisen; the world's protector, the maker of light, who gives eyes to the world that is blind, to cast away the burden of sin."

Congregation: "Thou has been victorious in the fight; thy moral excellence has accomplished thy aim; thy virtues are perfect; thou shalt satisfy men with good things."

Priest: "Godama is without sin; he is out of the miry pit; he stands on dry land."

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1. See *The Lost Tribes* by Dr. George Moore, Longman Green, Longman and Roberts, London, 1860.

*Congregation:* "Yea, he is out of the miry clay; he will save others."

These prayers seem to be a response on behalf of Godama and resemble the prophetic Psalms:

"He brought me up out of the muddy pit;  
Out of the mire and the clay;  
He set my foot on a rock;  
And gave me a firm footing."

(Psalm 40)

This coincidence is pointing to a common source. Buddhists worship Adonai—the Hebrew name of the Almighty—and the Ten Commandments of Buddhism and the Mosaic Ten Commandments are similar.

The Ten Commandments of Buddhism:

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Physical Virtues | 1. You must not kill any live animal.           |
|                  | 2. You must not steal.                          |
|                  | 3. You must not commit adultery.                |
|                  | 4. You must not tell lies.                      |
| Verbal Virtues   | 5. Do not speak divisive words (divide people). |
|                  | 6. Do not speak harsh words.                    |
|                  | 7. Do not engage in idle talk.                  |
| Mental Virtues   | 8. Do not covet.                                |
|                  | 9. Do not have harmful intent.                  |
|                  | 10. Do not have wrong view.                     |

The Ten Commandments of Moses:

1. I am the Lord thy God.
2. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain.

4. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.
5. Honor thy father and thy mother.
6. Thou shalt not murder.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, nor his wife, nor his maidservant nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

The Buddhist Ten Commandments given above are found in a Chinese manuscript *Grub-tha Thams-chand kyi Khuna dan Dod-Thsul Ston-pe Legs Shad Shel-gyi Melong*, (The history of religions and doctrines—the glass mirror). According to Prof. Fida Hassanain, the original manuscript (see his book *The Fifth Gospel*), is in the collection of the late Rev. S.S. Gergan, Gupkar Road, Srinagar, India.

The translation of the Chinese manuscript is given below:

“Yesu, the teacher and founder of the religion who was born miraculously, proclaimed himself as the Savior of the world. He commanded his disciples to observe the Ten Vows, among which he prohibited manslaughter and attainment of eternal joy and happiness through good deeds. He preached that evil deeds plunge one into hell, that there is eternal torment and misery. A sin committed in a state of consciousness cannot be condoned and is unpardonable.”



## **Bhavishya Mahapurana and Rajatarangani**

### **Bhavishya Mahapurana**

Bhavishya Mahapurana is an ancient Sanskrit word ascribed to Sutta and is said to have been compiled in 115 AD. There are eighteen volumes and the ninth of the series is called 'Bhavishya Mahapurana.' These were written from time to time starting from the 5th century BC. The original Sanskrit books were translated in English in 1910 AD. Bhavishya Mahapurana is considered to be one of the most important sources of information available about the second visit of Jesus to India.

King Shalivahana was the ruler of Kashmir including a large territory of India in 39-50 AD. There were regular attacks from the neighboring tribes from Parthia, Bactria, China and it is recorded that King Shalivahana met a holy prophet near Wyien in the mountains of Kashmir.

The translation of the relevant portion is given below.

By the route of the Himalayas and the river Indus, the invaders marched there and conquering and plundering the Aryas, they returned to their own country. They were delighted in abducting the women of the Aryas. During this period the ruler was King Shalivahana.

Shalivahana was the grandson of Vikramaditya and had

taken over the kingdom of his ancestors. He conquered the Sakas who were difficult to subdue and who had come from China and the Tittiri country.

He conquered the Bactrians, Parthians and Scythians. He seized their treasures and made them amenable to law.

He established a border between the Aryas and the Mleachas (foreigners) separately. This land of the Indus is known as the kingdom of the Aryas and is the best country.

This land of the Mleachas situated across the river Indus was once dominated by a great Mahatma.

One day Shalivahana came to one of the high peaks of the Himalayas. There in the land of the Hun (Ladakh) the mighty king saw a noble person of white complexion wearing white garments.

The king asked the holy man who he was and he replied cheerfully, "I am known as the son of God, and born of a virgin." He further said, "I am the exponent of the Mleacha dharma and preach truth."

Having heard this the king asked, "What is your religion?"

He said, "O great king, I come from a foreign country where there is no longer truth and where evil knows no bounds. I appeared as the Messiah in the land of Amalekites. But Ihamasi of the barbarians appeared in a terrible form. Then having overcome their evil deeds, I became their Messiah.

“O king, listen, the religion I established among the non-believers purified their souls and their bodies of dirt and superstition. After seeking refuge in the prayers of the Naigama, man will pray to the Eternal. Through justice, truth, unity of spirit and meditations, man will find his way to Issa in the center of light. God as omnipotent and steadfast as the sun will unite the spirit of all wandering beings in himself.

“Thus, O king, Ihamasi will be destroyed and the pure image of Issa, the giver of happiness will remain forever in the heart, and I was called Issa-Masih.!”

Having heard this, the king returned after making obeisance to him.<sup>1</sup>

### Rajatarangani

This is yet another Sanskrit document which gives the history of Kashmir and its kings from earliest times in a poetic form. Mr. M.A. Stein translated it into English in 1900 and Dr. Tokan Sumi translated it into Japanese in 1970.

This document narrates that Sandhi-Mati also known as the ‘Spirit of God’ was put on the cross but resurrected like Jesus.

The savior is named Isana, the person crucified is named

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1. The above excerpt indicates that Jesus after survival on the Cross was travelling in disguise under an assumed name, Issa-Masih, and he was in Kashmir.

Naigama appears to be some holy book or this may refer to the meditation he learnt in India. As stated in the book *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ* by Levy, the following is relevant. “There is a silence where the soul may meet its God, and there the fountain of wisdom is, and all who enter are immersed in light, and filled with wisdom, love and power.”

Sandhi-Mati, the prince of the Aryas. This is the first time the act of crucifixion is mentioned in any ancient Hindu record.

This historic document is translated as follows:

At that time a mysterious report of future events spread from house to house and declared:

To Sandhi-Mati will belong the kingdom. The king thereupon threw him into the prison, and there he pined with his legs tormented by cruel fetters. The king thereupon thought that the only way to frustrate the decree of fate was to kill him. If foolish men prepare a device to work off a coming event, one may be sure that fate intends to open new avenues.

Then under the orders of the king, Sandhi-Mati, the sage, was put on the cross by savage executioners.

The news reached Isana, the great guru and he proceeded to the place of execution where his disciple Sandhi-Mati had suffered without a sympathizer.

He found him reduced to a skeleton on the cross.

“Woe, that I see thee today, O dear, in this condition.”

He then drew forth the bone which the cross had pierced through.

He carried away the skeleton but on his forehead he read inscribed as follows:

“He will have a poor life, imprisonment, death on the cross and still thereafter a throne.”

Fate is the embodiment of all miracles; what else but fate



would bring him to life again.

Then he stayed at that very place, in his anxiety to see the fulfilment of the prediction and watch the skeleton. He smelt a heavenly perfume of incense in the middle of the night.

Hidden behind the tree, he then saw the skeleton, being fitted up with all its limbs.

Sandhi-Mati resembled a person just arisen from deep sleep, covered with heavenly ointments.

Then Sandhi-Mati, who wore a magnificent dress and a wreath, recovered memory of his past and bowed with a reverence before his guru, Isana.



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## Kashmir and the Lost Tribes

The Kashmir valley is unique in its beauty and the history of its people is fascinating. Nowhere in the world is there a valley so large; over 5,000 square miles situated at an altitude of 1,600 meters. Its mountains and rivers have continued to be a unique attraction to young and old alike. Its large lakes with the backdrop of the snow-clad Himalayas make it look like a paradise on earth.

Kashmir has been the abode of sages for centuries and a meeting point of several cultures. Since ancient times Kashmir maintained trade relations with Afghanistan, Iran and central Asia. The silk route connected Jerusalem, Bostra, Damascus, Palmyra, Edessa, Nisbeus (Nisbis), Herat, Bamiyan, Kabul, Khybar, Taxila, Murree, Chitral, Gilgit, Bandipur and Kashmir.

Many centuries before the advent of Jesus Christ, the Greeks penetrated into north India and the Indus basin through the land routes. The Israelites who had gone into exile in 722 BC founded scattered Israeli communities throughout the Middle and Far East.

Historians have also recorded that some Jewish tribes came in contact with the Greeks. In 323 BC, Alexander the Great conquered Egypt and the Jews considered him as their liberator and extended all assistance to him and joined his army as mercenaries. When Alexander passed through Palestine and Syria

the Jews welcomed him. Having conquered Persia, he marched forward but at the river Beas (north India) his troops refused to go forward. He, therefore, kept some garrisons to guard and protect his eastern captured territory. As a result, several Jewish mercenaries settled in these parts of north India and Afghanistan.

As mentioned earlier, Afghanistan was an important country through which the trade routes passed linking the Persian region to Asia Minor, Kashmir and central Asia. The famous world traveller, Ibn Batuta, makes special mention of the Tomb of Prophet Ezekiel in Balk.

Some scholars state that the valley of Kashmir was named by its inhabitants as Kasheer because it was inhabited by a people known as Kash or Kush who were of Semitic origin. There are several towns named Kash, Kashan, Kashgar in this region.

Kush or Cush was the son of Ham and a grandson of Noah. He was the founder of the Kash or Cush tribe which settled in the east. The boatmen of Kashmir consider themselves to be descendants of Noah.

To unravel the mystery of these facts and legends of the past, scholars have been scanning through ancient Buddhist, Sanskrit and Arabic records, archaeological sites and monuments. They have discovered traces of the Lost Tribes in several villages in addition to the legendary grave of Moses and his rod, Temple of King Solomon and Tomb of Jesus where he is buried. The Lost Tribe in Gutlibag-Gandarbal is one such tribe described in earlier pages of this book.

The Moslem historian Al-Breuni (born 973 AD) writes:

“They are particularly anxious about the natural strength of their country, and therefore, take always much care to keep a stronghold upon the entrances and roads leading

it. In consequence, it is very difficult to have any commerce with them. In former times, they used to allow one or two foreigners to enter their country, particularly Jews, but at present they do not allow any Hindu whom they do not know personally to enter, much less other people." (English translation by Dr. Edward C. Sachan, London, Trubner, 1888).

Persian sources have given information that before the advent of Islam, there were several large Jewish settlements in the valley of Kashmir. It is said that at the Royal Court of Akbar they had forty priests who were scholars, well-read in the Talmud, Torah, and the Bible. Akbar used to hold seminars of several religious heads and to unite them he started a new religion called 'Din-e-Elahi' which some scholars believe was derived from the word 'Din-e-Elohim.'

Emperor Akbar (1542-1605) constructed the new capital at Fatehpur Sikri, 20 miles from Agra. He inscribed the following parable of Jesus on the main archway of the Buland Darwaza:

Jesus, the son of Mary, said:

"This world is a bridge

Pass over it;

But build no house upon it

He who hopes for an hour

Hopes for eternity!

This world does not last more than an hour

Spend it in prayers

For what follows is unknown."

Not all that Jesus preached has been recorded in the Bible; works of several authors considered apocryphal or heretical have



been destroyed. The above thought inscribed by Akbar is identical to the Essene philosophy of which Jesus was a member.

Khwaja Nazir Ahmad in his book *Jesus in Heaven on Earth* (1952) has given names of a number of tribes and places in Kashmir which could be traced to Palestine. He found in Kashmir some graves (with a Hebrew inscription) facing East-West, unlike Muslim graves which are North-South. He has extensively written about food habits, marriage and birth customs, burial and mourning customs followed by some Kashmiris, which give ample evidence to show their link to the Lost Tribes.

Some of the Kashmiris are very strict about eating fish with scales only and do not eat eel—eat only *halal* meat—remove the sinews of the hollow of the thigh near the joint and do not use fat but only oil as a medium of cooking.

It is also mentioned that some of the Kashmiri pundits abstain from taking a journey on Saturday, or enter a new house on that day. Some of the gujjars of Kashmir do not plow their fields on Saturdays nor milk their cows.

Jews have the Levites to perform the function of priests and the Kashmiri pundits have *Kahanas* to attend to the religious ceremonies.

Like the Jews of old, Afghans and Kashmiris weigh their grain as so many 'ass-loads.' The khar-war (ass-load) is a measure recognized by the State of Kashmir.

### **Kashmiri Language**

The Kashmiri language underwent change with the advent of tribes into the region. Research reveals that the original Kashmiri words and proverbs are a mixture of many languages—Aramaic, Hebrew, Sanskrit and Persian.

Mufti Sadiq asserts that the nucleus to some extent is drawn

from the Hebrew language. Some of the words are given here:

Hebrew	Meaning	Kashmiri	Meaning
Abital	Father of dew	Abtal	Under water
Achor	Sorrow	Achor	Causing grief
Asiel	Created by God	Asiel	Angelic person
Atal	To be dark	Atal	Bat
Bacca	Weeping	Baca	Howling
Baal	Natural stream	Bal	Spring
Beri	Man of well	Beuri	Well
Dumeh	Silence	Domb	Quiet
Gozan	Stone quarry	Gozan	Mountain
Hatipha	Seized or caught	Hapat	Bear
Manakhah	Resting place	Malakhat	Graveyard
Shaul	Fox	Shaul	Fox

### Ancient Temples of Kashmir

One of the ancient temples of Kashmir, that of Martand near Mattan, has a colonnade of 84 fluted pillars. The plinth mouldings and columns indicate that the architectural style is Greek.

Another temple is Takhti-i-Sulaiman—the throne of Solomon built on a hill nearly 1,500 feet high and right in the center of Srinagar facing Dal Lake. Today, this temple is called Shankaracharya Temple.

The temple is on a high octagonal plinth approached by a long flight of steps over which this large stone edifice is built.

The date of construction according to Princep's Tables is prior to 2,500 BC. In Kashmir, the memory of King Solomon is held in profound veneration. It is believed that Menelik, the son of Queen Sheba and King Solomon, built this edifice in Srinagar. He brought some craftsmen from his native country to construct the same. An ancient graveyard exists halfway at the

foot of the hill where some graves are East-West, indicating that they could be Jewish. Prof. Fida Hassanain and I looked for inscriptions on the graves but our search was not complete due to trees and bushes which have overgrown in the area.

G.T. Vigne, in his book *Travels in Kashmir, Ladakh and Iskardoo*, speaks of a Jewish graveyard at the foot of this hill.

This temple bore four Persian inscriptions in the Khat-i-Sulus script, the details of which are given by Mulla Nādiri, the first Muslim historian of Kashmir. While dealing with the reign of Gopadatta, he writes:

“Gopadatta, during his reign built many temples. The dome of the Takht-i-Suleiman was found to be cracked and he deputed one of his ministers named Suleiman who had come from Persia to repair it. Hindus objected that he (minister) was an infidel and belonged to another religion. During this time, Hazrat Yuz Asaf came from the Holy Land to this Holy Valley and proclaimed his prophethood. He devoted himself day and night in prayer to God and having attained the heights of piety and virtue, he declared himself to be a messenger of God for the people of Kashmir. He invited people to his religion. Because the people of the Valley had faith in this prophet, Raja Gopadatta referred the objections of the Hindus to him for his decision. It was because of the prophet's orders that Suleiman, whom Hindus called Sandiman, completed the repairs of the dome in the year fifty and four. Further, on one of the stones of the flank walls encasing the stairs, Suleiman inscribed:

In these times Yuz Asaf proclaimed his prophethood and on the other stone of the stairs, he also inscribed that he

(Yuz Asaf) was Yusu, Prophet of the Children of Israel.”

(Note: The two stone tablets have been removed, but their location is visible even today)

The four inscriptions in Persian of which three and four are missing, are as follows:

1. The mason of this pillar is the suppliant Bihishti Zargar—year fifty and four.
2. Khwaja Rukum, son of Murjan, erected this pillar.
3. At this time Yuz Asaf proclaimed his prophethood—year fifty and four.
4. He is Jesus, Prophet of the Children of Israel.

### **Rozabal, Tomb of Jesus**

In Mohalla Khaniyar in Srinagar there is a tomb called Rozabal and is described as the tomb of Yuz Asaf (Jesus). This tomb has a long history and many scholars have written, from time to time, about its origin and the presence of Jesus in Kashmir.

This tomb of Yuz Asaf is about 3 km from the Tourist Information Office (Bus Terminus) in Srinagar. The road passes over a canal and through narrow bazaars displaying the arts of Kashmir. On both sides of the road are old brick buildings with corrugated sheet roofing and some have many beautiful features of the architecture of Kashmir. At the end of a small triangular park is a timber and brick structure, single storeyed, with a corrugated sheet roof. One cannot imagine that this modest structure could be preserving the mortal remains of a great prophet whose philosophy and faith have endured for 2,000 years.

The entrance door has a chain hanging in the center—a sort of *mezuza*, on which the name of God is inscribed. Inside you see a large grave of Yuz Asaf and a small one of Saint Nasir-ud-



Din buried here in the fifteenth century.

Nearly 2,000 years ago, this spot was close to the Dal Lake and low-lying. It is said that the present structure was perhaps erected over the grave during the reign of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan (1628-58). The actual grave of Yuz Asaf is below the existing grave and it is said that it was as per the Jewish custom in the East-West direction. There were steps leading down to the grave from the existing road to the West, but now this access has been closed.

The original tablet affixed on this tomb was for unknown reasons removed and is not traceable. The tablet fixed on the tomb reads:

RAUZA HAZRAT YUZ ASAF, KHANYAR  
(The Shrine of Hazrat Yuz Asaf Khanyar)

Prof. Fida Hassanain, ex-Director of Archeology, Kashmir and author of *The Fifth Gospel* writes that the cellar below the existing structure is the original sepulchre, containing the remains of Yuz Asaf. He has also stated that a wooden cross and a wooden incense stand, a candle stand and ritual artefacts were near the door of the tomb but which are now missing. Near the grave, however, is a stone where footprints are engraved, believed to be of Jesus. This may have been added by the Buddhists after their tradition.

The great Oriental writer, Al-Shaikh Al-Said-us-Sadiq (962 AD), who wrote over 300 books, writes in his famous book *Kamal-ud-Din*:

"The Angel of God, therefore, guided him (Jesus) to leave the country ... and then leaving Sholabeth (Ceylon) he proceeded on his journey ... And he continued his journey till he reached

a large valley. He lifted his face and saw a tree beside a spring. The tree was beautiful with many branches and sweet fruits; innumerable birds were sitting on it. He was delighted with this view and moved on till he reached the tree and began to interpret what he saw. He compared the tree with 'Bushra'<sup>1</sup> towards which he used to invite people; the spring with learning and the birds and the people who sat around him and accepted the religion he preached ...

"Then Yuz Asaf, after roaming about in many cities, reached that country which is called Kashmir. He travelled in it far and wide and stayed there and spent his remaining life there until death overtook him. He left the earthly body and was elevated towards the Light. But before his death, he sent for a disciple of his, Ba'bad (Thomas) by name, who used to serve him and was well versed in all matters. He (Yuz Asaf) expressed his last wish to him and said:

"My time for departing from this world has come. Carry on your duties properly and turn not back from truth and say your prayers regularly. He then directed Ba'bad (Thomas) to prepare a tomb over him at the very place he died. He then stretched his legs towards the West and head towards the East and died. May God bless him."

Ain-ul-Hayat describes the various journeys of Yuz Asaf:

"He went to many cities and preached to (the people of) those cities. At last he reached the city of Srinagar. He invited its inhabitants to righteousness and resided there till death approached him, and his holy spirit departed from his earthly body and went to rest with God. But before his death, he called his

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1. The canonical Gospels of the New Testament are called 'Bushra' in Hebrew.

companion, Ba'bad (Thomas) and made a will and directed him to construct a tomb for him. He laid himself with his head towards the East and stretched his legs towards the West and went to the place of eternity."

The grave of Yuz Asaf is looked after and protected by guardians since its construction. The present custodian of the tomb, Saifuddin, had in his possession an ancient document which indicated that the tomb is of Jesus and Saifuddin's ancestor Rehman Mir was granted the right to protect it.

The decree issued by the Grand Mufti (Judge) of Kashmir to Rehman Mir (1766 AD) is signed by five muftis (judges) of Srinagar and bears their seals and signatures and is dated 1766 AD. See photograph.

Translation of the decree by Khwaja Nazir Ahmad (bar-at-law), author of *Jesus in Heaven on Earth*:

In this Kingdom in the Department of Learning and Piety and in the Court of Justice Rehman Mir, son of Bahadur Mir, states that at the holy shrine of Yuz Asaf Prophet (*Paighambar*), may God bless him, nobles and ministers and kings and high dignitaries and the general public come from all directions to pay their homage and make offerings and (he claims) that he is absolutely entitled to receive (and utilize) them and no one else (has this right) and that all others should be restrained from (interfering with) his rights.

After recording evidence it has been established that in the reign of Raja Gopadatta who repaired the building on Mount Solomon and built many temples, a man came here whose name was Yuz Asaf. He was a prince by descent and had given up all worldly affairs and was a law-

giver. He used to devote himself to the prayer of God, day and night; and used to spend most of his time alone in meditation. This happened after the first great flood of Kashmir and when the people of Kashmir had taken to idol worship, the Prophet Yuz Asaf had been sent as a Prophet to preach to the people of Kashmir. He used to proclaim unity of God till death overtook him and he died. He was buried in Mohallah Khaniyar on the bank of the lake which is known as *Rouzabal*. In the year 871 AH (1451 AD) Syed Nasiruddin Rizvi, a descendant of Imam Moosa Ali Raza was buried besides Yuz Asaf.

Since the place is being visited regularly by all, high and low, and the said Rahman Mir is the hereditary custodian of the place he is entitled to receive the offerings which may be made therein and no one else has any right to or connection with the said offerings.

Given under our hands this 11th Jumada-al-Thania 1184 AH. Signed and sealed:

Mulla Fazal, *Mufti-Azam*  
 Abdul Shakur, *Mufti-Azam*  
 Ahmadullah, *Mufti*  
 Muhammad Azam, *Mufti*  
 Hafiz Ahsanullah, *Mufti*

Signed and sealed:

Muhammad Akbar, *Khadim*  
 Raza Akbar, *Khadim*  
 Khizar Muhammad, *Khadim*  
 Habibullah, *Khadim*



## Annex: Issa in India

Nicholas Notovitch discovered the following Buddhist scrolls at the Hemis monastery and the fourteen chapters, including Chapters IV, V and VI recorded by Swami Abhedananda in 1922 are reproduced here with the kind permission of the Ramakrishna Mission, Calcutta. These passages give the history of the Hebrew nation right from the Exodus to the travel of Jesus to India, his preachings and crucifixion. These fourteen chapters of Notovitch have some similarity to the fifteen chapters transcribed by Levy H. Dowling in his book *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ* (1890).

### CHAPTER I

1. The traders coming from Israel have given the following account of what has occurred:
2. The earth trembled and the heavens wept, because of the great crime committed in the land of Israel.
3. For there was tortured and murdered the great and just Issa, in whom was manifest the soul of the Universe;
4. Which had incarnated in a simple mortal, to benefit men and destroy the evil spirit in them;
5. To lead man back to peace, love and happiness, man, degraded by his sins, and recall him to the one and indivisible Creator whose mercy is infinite.

## CHAPTER II

1. The people of Israel—who inhabit a fertile country producing two harvests a year and affording pasture for large herds of cattle—have due to their sins brought down upon themselves the anger of the Lord;

2. Who inflicted upon them terrible punishments, taking from them their land, their cattle and their wealth. They were carried away into slavery by the rich and mighty Pharaohs who then ruled the land of Egypt.

3. The Israelites were, by the Pharaohs, treated worse than beasts, condemned to hard labor and put in irons; their bodies were covered with wounds and sores; they were not permitted to live under a roof, and were starved to death;

4. That they might be maintained in a state of continual terror and deprived of all human resemblance;

5. And in this great calamity, the Israelites, remembering their Celestial Protector, implored his forgiveness and mercy.

6. At that period reigned in Egypt an illustrious Pharaoh, who was renowned for his many victories, immense riches, and the gigantic palaces he had erected by the labor of his slaves.

7. This Pharaoh had two sons, the younger of whom, named Mossa, had acquired much knowledge from the sages of Israel.

8. And Mossa was beloved by all in Egypt for his kindness of heart and the pity he showed to all sufferers.

9. Mossa saw that the Israelites, in spite of their many sufferings, had not forsaken their God, and refused to worship the gods of Egypt, created by the hands of man.

10. He also put his faith in their invisible God, who did not suffer them to betray Him, despite their ever growing weakness.

11. And the teachers among Israel animated Mossa in his

zeal, and prayed of him that he would intercede with his father, Pharaoh, in favor of their co-religionists.

12. Prince Mossa went before his father, begging him to lighten the burden of their unhappy people. Pharaoh, however, became kindled with rage, and ordered that they should be tormented more than before.

13. And it came to pass that Egypt was visited by a great calamity. The plague decimated young and old, the healthy and the sick. Pharaoh beheld in this the resentment of his own gods against him.

14. But Prince Mossa said to his father that it was the God of his slaves who thus interposed on behalf of his tortured people, and avenged them upon the Egyptians.

15. Thereupon, Pharaoh commanded Mossa, his son, to gather all the Israelite slaves, and lead them away, and build, at a great distance from the capital, another city where he should rule over them.

16. Then Mossa made known to the Hebrew slaves that he had obtained their freedom in the name of his and their God, the God of Israel; and with them he left the city and departed from the land of Egypt.

17. He led them back to the land (Canaan) which, because of their many sins, had been taken from them. There he gave them laws and admonished them to pray always to God, the indivisible Creator, whose kindness is infinite.

18. After Prince Mossa's death, the Israelites observed rigorously his laws; and God rewarded them for the ills to which they had been subjected in Egypt.

19. Their kingdom became one of the most powerful on earth; their kings made themselves renowned for their treasures, and peace reigned in Israel.

## CHAPTER III

1. The glory of Israel's wealth spread over the whole earth, and the surrounding nations became envious.

2. But the Most High himself led the victorious arms of the Hebrews, and the Pagans did not dare to attack them.

3. Unfortunately, man is prone to err, and the sincerity of the Israelites to their God was not of long duration.

4. Little by little they forgot the favors he had bestowed upon them; rarely invoked his name, and sought rather the protection of magicians and sorcerers.

5. The kings and the chiefs among the people substituted their own laws against those given by Mossa; the temple of God and the observances of their ancient faith were neglected; the people addicted themselves to sensual gratifications and lost their original purity:

6. Many centuries had passed since their exodus from Egypt, when God bethought himself of again inflicting chastisement upon them.

7. Strangers invaded Israel, devastated the land, destroyed the villages, and carried their inhabitants away into captivity.

8. At last came the Pagans from over the sea, from the land of Romeles (Rome). These made themselves masters of the Hebrews, and placed over them their army chiefs, who governed in the name of Caesar.

9. They defiled the temples, forced the inhabitants to cease the worship of the indivisible God, and compelled them to sacrifice to the heathen gods.

10. They made common soldiers of those who had been men of rank; the women became their prey, and the common people, reduced to slavery, were carried away by thousands over the sea.



11. The children were slain, and soon, in the whole land, there was naught heard but weeping and lamentation.

12. In this extreme distress, the Israelites once more remembered their great God, implored his mercy and prayed for his forgiveness. Our Father, in his inexhaustible compassion, heard their prayer.

## CHAPTER IV

1. And now the time had come, which the Supreme Judge, in his boundless mercy, had chosen to incarnate himself in a human being.

2. And the Eternal Spirit, which dwelt in a state of complete inertness and supreme beatitude, awakened and detached itself from the Eternal Being for an indefinite period.

3. In order to indicate, in assuming the human form, the means of identifying ourselves with the Divinity and of attaining eternal happiness.

4. And to teach us, by his example, how we may reach a state of moral purity and separate the soul from its gross envelope, that it may attain the perfection necessary to enter the Kingdom of Heaven which is unchangeable and where eternal happiness reigns.

5. Soon after, a wonderful child was born in the land of Israel; God Himself, through the mouth of this child, spoke of the nothingness of the body and of the grandeur of the soul.

6. The parents of this new-born child were poor people, belonging by birth to a family of exalted piety, which disregarded its former worldly greatness to magnify the name of the Creator and thank him for the misfortunes with which he was pleased to try them.

7. To reward them for their adherence to the path of truth, God blessed the first-born of this family; he chose him as his elect, and sent him forth to raise those that had fallen into evil, and to heal them that suffered.

8. The Divine child, to whom was given the name of Issa, commenced even in his most tender years to speak of the one and indivisible God, exhorting the people that had strayed from the path of righteousness to repent and purify themselves of the sins they had committed.

9. People came from all parts to listen and marvel at the words of wisdom that fell from his infant lips; all the Israelites united in proclaiming that the Eternal Spirit dwelt within this child.

10. When Issa had attained the age of thirteen, when an Israelite should take a wife.

11. The house in which his parents dwelt and earned their livelihood in modest labour, became a meeting place for the rich and noble, who desired to have for a son-in-law the young Issa, who had been celebrated for his edifying discourses in the name of the Almighty.

12. It was then that Issa secretly left his house and went out of Jerusalem and, in company with some merchants, travelled towards Sind (India).

13. That he might perfect himself in the divine word and study the laws of the great Buddha.

## CHAPTER V

1. In the course of his fourteenth year, young Issa, blessed by God, journeyed beyond Sindh and settled among the Aryas in the beloved country of God.

2. The fame of his name spread along the Northern Sindh. When he passed through the country of the five rivers and the Radjiputana, the worshippers of the god Djaine, begged him to remain in their midst.

3. But he left the misguided admirers of Djaine and visited Juggernaut, in the province of Orsis (Orissa), where the remains of Vissa-Krichna rest, and where he received a joyous welcome from the white priests of Brahma.

4. They taught him to read and understand the Vedas, to heal by prayer, to teach and explain the Holy Scripture, to cast out evil spirits from the body of man and give him back human semblance.

5. He spent six yers in Juggernaut, Rajgriha, Benares, and the other holy cities; all loved him, for Issa lived in peace with the Vaisyas and the Sudras, to whom he taught the Holy Scripture.

6. But the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas declared that the Great Para-Brahma forbade them to approach those who were created from his entrails and from his feet.

7. That the Vaisyas were authorized to listen only to the reading of the Vedas, and that only on the days of festivals.

8. That the Sudras were not only forbidden to attend the reading of the Vedas, but not to even gaze upon; for their condition was to perpetually serve and act as slaves to the Brahmans, the Kshatriyas, and even to the Vaisyas.

9. "Death alone can free them from servitude," said Para Brahma. "Leave them, therefore, and worship with us the gods who will show their anger against you if you disobey them."

10. But Issa would not heed them; and going to the Sudras, preached against the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas.

11. He strongly denounced the men who robbed their fellow-

beings of their rights as men, saying: "God the Father establishes no difference between his children, who are all equally dear to him."

12. Issa denied the divine origin of the Vedas and the Puranas, declaring to his followers that only one law had been given to man to guide him in his actions.

13. "Fear thy God, bow down the knee before Him only, and to Him only must thy offerings be made."

14. Issa denied the Trimurti and the incarnation of Para-Brahma in Vishnu, Siva, and other gods, saying.

15. "The Eternal Judge, the Eternal Spirit, composes the one and indivisible soul of the universe, which alone creates, contains, and animates the whole.

16. "He alone has willed and created, He alone has existed from eternity and will exist without end; He has no equal neither in the heavens nor on this earth."

17. "The Great Creator shares His power with no one, still less with inanimate objects as you have been taught, for He alone possesses supreme power.

18. "He willed it, and the world appeared; by one divine thought He united the waters and separated them from the dry portion of the globe. He is the cause of the mysterious life of man, in whom He has breathed a part of his being.

19. "And He has subordinated to man, the land, the waters, the animals, and all that He has created, and which He maintains in immutable order by fixing the duration of each.

20. "The wrath of God shall soon be let loose on man, for he has forgotten his Creator and filled his temples with abominations, and he adores a host of creatures which God has subordinated to him.

21. "To please gods of stones and metals, he sacrifices



human beings—in whom dwells a part of the spirit of the Most High.

22. “And he humiliates them that labour by the sweat of their brow to gain the favour of an idler who is seated at a sumptuously spread table.

23. “They that deprive their brothers of divine happiness shall themselves be deprived of it, and the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas shall become the Sudras of the Sudras with whom the Eternal shall dwell for ever.

24. “For on the day of the Last Judgement, the Sudras and Vaisyas shall be forgiven because of their ignorance, while God shall send His wrath on those that have arrogated His rights.”

25. The Vaisyas and the Sudras were full of admiration for Issa and they asked him how they should pray.

26. “Do not worship idols, for they do not hear you; do not listen to the Vedas, where the truth is perverted; do not believe yourself first in all things, and do not humiliate your neighbor.

27. “Help the poor, assist the weak, harm no one, do not covet what you have not and what you see in the possession of others.”

## CHAPTER VI

1. The white priests and the warriors (Kshatriyas) who learnt of the discourse addressed by Issa to the Sudras, resolved upon his death and sent their servants for this purpose in search of the young prophet.

2. But Issa, warned of this danger by the Sudras, fled in the night from Juggernaut, gained the mountains, and took refuge in the Gothamide Country, the birth-place of the great Buddha Sakya-Muni, among the people who adored the only and sublime

Brahma.

3. Having perfectly learned the Pali tongue, the just Issa applied himself to the study of the sacred rolls of Soutras.

4. Six years later, Issa, whom the Buddha had chosen to spread his holy word, could perfectly explain the sacred rolls.

5. He then left Nepal and the Himalaya Mountains, descended into the valley of Rajipoutan and went westward, preaching to diverse people the supreme perfection of man.

6. And of the good we must do unto others, which is the surest means of quickly merging ourselves in the Eternal Spirit, "He who shall have recovered his primitive purity at death," said Issa, "shall have obtained the forgiveness of his sins, and shall have the right to contemplate the majestic figure of God."

7. In traversing the pagan territories, the divine Issa taught the people that the adoration of visible gods was contrary to the laws of nature.

8. "For man," said he, "has not been favored with the sight of the image of God nor the ability to construct a host of divinities resembling the Eternal.

9. "Moreover, it is against human conscience to have less regard for the greatness of divine purity, than for animals or works of stone or metal made by the hands of man.

10. "The eternal Lawgiver is one; there are no other Gods than He; He has parted the world with none, nor had He any counsellor.

11. "Even as a father shows kindness toward his children, so will God judge men after death, in conformity with His merciful laws. He will never humiliate his child by casting his soul for punishment into the body of a beast."

12. "The heavenly laws are opposed to the immolation of human sacrifices to a statue or an animal; for I, the God, have

sacrificed to man all the animals and all that the world contains.

13. "Everything has been sacrificed to man, who is directly and intimately united to me, his Father. Therefore, shall the man be severely judged and punished, by my law, who causes the sacrifice of my children.

14. "Man is naught before the eternal Judge; as the animal is before man.

15. "Therefore, I say unto you, leave your idols and perform not ceremonies which separate you from your Father and bind you to the priests, from whom heaven has turned away.

16. "For it is they who have led you away from the true God, and by superstitions and cruelty perverted the spirit and made you blind to the knowledge of the truth."

## CHAPTER VII

1. The words of Issa spread among the Pagans, through whose country he passed, and the inhabitants abandoned their idols.

2. Seeing this, the priests demanded of him who thus glorified the name of true God, that he should, in the presence of the people, prove the charges he made against them, and demonstrate the vanity of their idols.

3. And Issa answered them: "If your idols, or the animals you worship, really possess the supernatural powers you claim, let them strike me with a thunder-bolt before you!"

4. "Why dost not thou perform a miracle," replied the priests, "and let thy God confound ours, if He is greater than ours?"

5. But Issa said: "The miracles of our God have been wrought from the first day when the universe was created; and

are performed every day and every moment; whoso sees them not is deprived of one of the most beautiful gifts of life.

6. "And it is not on inanimate objects of stone, metal or wood that He will let His anger fall, but on the men who worship them and who, therefore, for their salvation, must destroy the idols they have made.

7. "Even as a stone and a grain of sand, which are naught before man, await patiently their use by Him,

8. "In like manner, man, who is nothing before God, must await in patience His pleasure for a manifestation of His favor.

9. "But woe to you! Ye adversaries of men, if it is not the favor you await, but rather the wrath of the Most High; woe to you, if you demand that He attest His power by a miracle!

10. "For it is not the idols which He will destroy in His wrath, but those by whom they were created; their hearts will be the prey of an eternal fire and their fiesh shall be given to the beasts of prey.

11. "God will drive away the contaminated animals from His flocks; but will take to Himself those who strayed because they knew not the heavenly part within them."

12. When the Pagans saw that the power of their priests was naught, they put faith in the words of Issa. Fearing the anger of the true God, they broke their idols to pieces and caused their priests to flee from among them.

13. Issa, furthermore, taught the Pagans that they should not endeavor to see the Eternal Spirit with their eyes; but to perceive Him with their hearts, and make themselves worthy of His favors by the purity of their souls.

14. "Not only," he said them, "must ye refrain from offering human sacrifices, but ye may not lay on the altar any creature to which life has been given, for all things created are



for man.

15. "Withhold not from your neighbour his just due, for this would be like stealing from him what he had earned in the sweat of his brow.

16. "Deceive none, that ye may not yourselves be deceived; seek to justify yourselves before the last judgement, for then it will be too late.

17. "Be not given to debauchery, for it is a violation of the law of God.

18. "That you may attain to supreme bliss ye must not only purify yourselves, but must also guide others into the path that will enable them to regain their primitive innocence."

## CHAPTER VIII

1. The countries round about were filled with the renown of Issa's preachings, and when he came unto Persia, the priests grew afraid and forbade the people hearing him;

2. Nevertheless, the villagers received him with joy, and the people listened intently to his words, which, being seen by the priests, caused them to order that he should be arrested and brought before their High Priest, who asked him:

3. "Of what new God dost thou speak? Knowest thou not, unfortunate man that thou art! that Saint Zoroaster is the only Just One, to whom alone was vouchsafed the honor of receiving revelations from the Most High;

4. "By whose command the angels complied His World in laws for the governance of His people, which were given to Zoroaster in Paradise?

5. "Who, then, art thou who darest to utter blasphemies against our God and sow doubt in the hearts of believers?"

6. And Issa said to them: "I preach no new God, but our celestial Father, who existed before the beginning and will exist until after the end.

7. "Of Him I have spoken to the people, who—even as innocent children—are incapable of comprehending God by their own intelligence, or fathoming the sublimity of the Divine Spirit;

8. "But, as the new-born child in the night recognizes the mother's breast, so your people, held in the darkness of error by your pernicious doctrines and religious ceremonies have recognized instinctively their Father, in the Father whose prophet I am.

9. "The Eternal Being says to your people, by my mouth, 'Ye shall not adore the sun, for it is but a part of the universe which I have created for man;

10. " 'It rises to warm you during your work; it sets to accord to you the rest that I have ordained.

11. " 'To me only ye owe all that ye possess, all that surrounds you and that is above and below you'."

12. "But," said the priests, "how could the people live according to your rules if they had no teachers?"

13. Whereupon Issa answered: "So long as they had no priests, they were governed by the natural law and conserved the simplicity of their souls;

14. "Their souls were in God and to communicate with the Father they had not to have recourse to the intermediation of idols, or animals, or fire, as taught by you.

15. "Ye pretend that man must adore the sun, and the Genii of Good and Evil. But I say unto you that your doctrine is pernicious. The sun does not act spontaneously, but by the will of the invisible Creator, who has made it.

16. "Who, then, has caused that this star lights the day, warms man at his work and vivifies the seeds sown in the ground?

17. "The Eternal Spirit is the soul of everything animate, and you commit a great sin in dividing Him into the Spirit of Evil and the Spirit of Good, for there is no God other than the God of Good.

18. "And He, like to the father of a family, does only good to His children, to whom He forgives their transgressions if they repent.

19. "And the Spirit of Evil dwells upon earth, in the hearts of those who turn the children of God away from the right path.

20. "Therefore, I say unto you; Fear the day of judgement, for God will inflict a terrible punishment upon all those who have led His children astray and beguiled them with superstitions and errors;

21. "Upon those who have blinded them who saw; who have brought contagion to the well; who have taught the worship of those things which God made to be subject to man, or to aid him in his works.

22. "Your doctrine is the fruit of your error in seeking to bring near to you the God of Truth, by creating for yourselves false gods."

23. When the Magi heard these words, they feared to themselves do him harm, but at night, when the whole city slept, they brought him outside the walls and left him on the highway, in the hope that he would become the prey of wild beasts.

24. But, protected by the Lord our God, Saint Issa continued on his way, without accident.

## CHAPTER IX

1. Issa—whom the Creator had selected to recall to the worship of the true God, men sunk in sin—was twenty-nine years old when he arrived in the land of Israel.

2. Since the departure therefrom of Issa, the Pagans had

caused the Israelites to endure more atrocious sufferings than before, and they were filled with despair.

3. Many among them had begun to neglect the laws of their God and those of Mossa, in the hope of winning the favor of their brutal conquerors.

4. But Issa, notwithstanding their unhappy condition, exhorted his countrymen not to despair, because the day of their redemption from the yoke of sin was near, and he himself, by his example, confirmed their faith in the God of their fathers.

5. "Children, yield not yourselves to despair," said the celestial Father to them, through the mouth of Issa, "for I have heard your lamentations and your cries have reached my ears.

6. "Weep not, oh, my beloved sons! For your griefs have touched the heart of your Father and He has forgiven you, as He forgave your ancestors.

7. "Forsake not your families to plunge into debauchery; stain not the nobility of your souls; adore not idols which cannot but remain deaf to your supplications.

8. "Fill my temple with your hope and your patience, and do not abjure the religion of your forefathers, for I have guided them and bestowed upon them of my beneficence.

9. "Lift up those who have fallen; feed the hungry and help the sick, that ye may be altogether pure and just in the day of the last judgment which I prepare for you."

10. The Israelites came in multitudes to listen to Issa's words; and they asked him where they should thank their Heavenly Father, since their enemies had demolished their temples and robbed them of their sacred vessels.

11. Issa told them that God cared not for temples erected by human hands, but that human hearts were the true temples of God.



12. "Enter into your temple, into your heart; illuminate it with good thoughts, with patience and the unshakeable faith which you owe to your Father.

13. "And your sacred vessels! They are your hands and your eyes. Do that which is agreeable to God, for in doing good to your fellow-men, you perform a ceremony that embellishes the temple wherein abideth Him who has created you.

14. "For God has created you in His own image, innocent, with pure souls, and hearts filled with kindness and not made for the planning of evil, but to be the sanctuaries of love and justice.

15. "Therefore, I say unto you, soil not your hearts with evil, for in them the Eternal Being abides.

16. "When ye do works of devotion and love, let them be with full hearts, and see that the motives of your actions be not hopes of gain or self-interest;

17. "For actions, so impelled, will not bring you nearer to salvation, but lead to a state of moral degradation wherein theft, lying and murder pass for generous deeds."

## CHAPTER X

1. Issa went from one city to another, strengthening by the word of God the courage of the Israelites, who were near to succumbing under their weight of woe, and thousands of the people followed him to hear his teachings.

2. But the chiefs of the cities were afraid of him and they informed the principal Governor, residing in Jerusalem, that a man called Issa had arrived in the country, who by his sermons had arrayed the people against the authorities, and that multitudes, listening assiduously to him, neglected their labor; and,

caused the Israelites to endure more atrocious sufferings than before, and they were filled with despair.

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they added, he said that in a short time they would be free of their invader rulers.

3. Then Pilate, the Governor of Jerusalem, gave orders that they should lay hold of the preacher Issa and bring him before the judges. In order, however, not to excite the anger of the populace, Pilate directed that he should be judged by the priests and scribes, the Hebrew elders, in their temple.

4. Meanwhile, Issa, continuing his preachings, arrived at Jerusalem, and the people, who already knew his fame, having learned of his coming, went out to meet him.

5. They greeted him respectfully and opened to him the doors of their temple, to hear from his mouth what he had said in other cities of Israel.

6. And Issa said to them: "The human race perishes, because of the lack of faith; for the darkness and the tempest have caused the flock to go astray and they have lost their shepherds.

7. "But the tempests do not rage forever and the darkness will not hide the light eternally; soon the sky will become serene, the celestial light will again overspread the earth, and the strayed flock will re-unite around their shepherd.

8. "Wander not in the darkness, seeking the way, lest ye fall into the ditch; but gather together, sustain one another, put your faith in your God and wait for the first glimmer of light to re-appear.

9. "He who sustains his neighbor, sustains himself; and he who protects his family, protects all his people and his country.

10. "For, be assured that the day is near when you will be delivered from the darkness; you will be re-united into one family and your enemy will tremble with fear, he who is ignorant of the favor of the great God."

11. The priests and the elders who heard him, filled with



admiration for his language, asked him if it was true that he had sought to raise the people against the authorities of the country, as had been reported to the Governor Pilate.

12. "Can one raise against estrayed men, to whom darkness has hidden their road and their door?" answered Issa. "I have but forewarned the unhappy, as I do here in this temple, that they should no longer advance on the dark road, for an abyss opens before their feet.

13. "The power of this earth is not of long duration and is subject to numberless changes. It would be of no avail for a man to rise in revolution against it, for one phase of it always succeeds another, and it is thus that it will go on until the extinction of human life.

14. "But do you not see that the powerful, and the rich, sow among the children of Israel a spirit of rebellion against the eternal power of Heaven?"

15. Then the elders asked him: "Who art thou, and from what country has thou come to us? We have not formerly heard thee spoken of and do not even know thy name?"

16. "I am an Israelite," answered Issa; "and on the day of my birth have seen the walls of Jerusalem, and have heard the sobs of my brothers reduced to slavery, and the lamentations of my sisters carried away by the Pagans;

17. "And my soul was afflicted when I saw that my brethren had forgotten the true God. When a child I left my father's house to go and settle among other people.

18. "But, having heard it said that my brethren suffered even greater miseries now, I have come back to the land of my fathers, to recall my brethren to the faith of their ancestors, which teaches us patience upon earth in order to attain the perfect and supreme bliss above."

19. Then the wise old men put to him again this question: "We are told that thou disownest the laws of Mossa, and that thou teaches the people to forsake the temple of God?"

20. Whereupon Issa: "One does not demolish that which had been given by our Heavenly Father, and which has been destroyed by sinners. I have but enjoined the people to purify the heart of all stains, for it is the veritable temple of God.

21. "As regards the laws of Mossa, I have endeavored to re-establish them in the hearts of men; and I say unto you that ye ignore their true meaning, for it is not vengeance but pardon which they teach. Their sense has been perverted."

## CHAPTER XI

1. When the priests and the elders heard Issa, they decided among themselves not to give judgment against him, for he had done no harm to any one, and, presenting themselves before Pilate—who was made Governor of Jerusalem by the Pagan king of the country of Romeles—they spake to him thus:

2. "We have seen the man whom thou chargest with inciting our people to revolt; we have heard his discourse and know that he is our countryman;

3. "But the leaders of the cities have given you false reports, for he is a just man, who teaches the people the word of God. After interrogating him, we have allowed him to go in peace."

4. The Governor thereupon became very angry, and sent his disguised spies to keep watch upon Issa and report to the authorities the least word he addressed to the people.

5. In the meantime, the holy Issa continued to visit the neighboring cities and preach the true way of the Lord, enjoining the Hebrews patience and promising them speedy deliverance.

6. And all the time the great numbers of the people followed him wherever he went, and many did not leave him at all, but attached themselves to him and served him.

7. And Issa said: "Put not your faith in miracles performed by the hands of men, for He who rules nature is alone capable of doing supernatural things, while man is impotent to arrest the wrath of the winds or cause the rain to fall.

8. "One miracle, however, is within the power of man to accomplish. It is, when his heart is filled with sincere faith, he resolves to root out from his mind all evil promptings and desires, and when, in order to attain this end, he ceases to walk the path of iniquity.

9. "All the things done without God are only gross errors, illusions and seductions, serving but to show how much the heart of the doer is full of presumption, falsehood and impurity.

10. "Put not your faith in oracles. God alone knows the future. He who has recourse to the diviners soils the temple of his heart and shows his lack of faith in his Creator.

11. "Belief in the diviners and their miracles destroys the innate simplicity of man and his childlike purity. An infernal power takes hold of him who so errs, and forces him to commit various sins and give himself to the worship of idols.

12. "But the Lord our God, to whom none can be equalled, is one omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent; He alone possesses all wisdom and all light.

13. "To Him ye must address yourselves, to be comforted in your afflictions, aided in your works, healed in your sickness and who asks of Him, shall not ask in vain.

14. "The secrets of nature are in the hands of God, for the whole world, before it was made manifest, existed in the bosom of the divine thought, and has become material and visible by

the will of the Most High.

15. "When ye pray to him, become again like little children, for ye know neither the past, nor the present, nor the future, and God is the Lord of Time."

## CHAPTER XII

1. "Just man," said to him the disguised spies of the Governor of Jerusalem, "tell us if we must continue to do the will of Caesar, or expect our near deliverance?"

2. And Issa, who recognized the questioners as the apostate spies sent to follow him, replied to them: "I have not told you that you would be delivered from Caesar; it is the soul sunk in error which will gain its deliverance.

3. "There cannot be a family without a head, and there cannot be order in a people without a Caesar, whom ye should implicitly obey, as he will be held to answer for his acts before the Supreme Tribunal."

4. "Does Caesar possess a divine right?" The spies asked him again, "and is he the best of mortals?"

5. "There is no one 'the best' among human beings; but there are many bad, who—even as the sick need physicians—require the care of those chosen for that mission, in which must be used the means given by the sacred law of our Heavenly Father;

6. "Mercy and justice are the high prerogatives of Caesar, and his name will be illustrious if he exercises them.

7. "But he who acts otherwise, who transcends the limits of power he has over those under his rule, and even goes so far as to put their lives in danger, offends the great Judge and derogates from his own dignity in the eyes of men."

8. Upon this, an old woman who had approached the group,



to better hear Issa, was pushed aside by one of the disguised men, who placed himself before her.

9. Then said Issa: "It is not good for a son to push away his mother, that he may occupy the place which belongs to her. Whoso doth not respect his mother—the most sacred being after his God—is unworthy of the name of son.

10. "Hearken to what I say to you: Respect woman, for in her we see the mother of the universe, and all the truth of divine creation is to come through her.

11. "She is the fount of everything good and beautiful, as she is also the germ of life and death. Upon her man depends in all his existence, for she is his moral and natural support in his labors.

12. "In pain and suffering she brings you forth; in the sweat of her brow she watches over your growth, and until her death you cause her greatest anxieties. Bless her and adore her for she is your only friend and support on earth.

13. "Respect her; defend her. In so doing you will gain for yourself her love; you will find favor before God, and for her sake many sins will be remitted to you.

14. "Love your wife and respect her, for she will be the mother of tomorrow and later the grandmother of a whole nation.

15. "Be submissive to the wife; her love ennobles man, softens his hardened heart, tames the wild beast in him and changes it to a lamb.

16. "Wife and mother are the priceless treasures which God has given to you. They are the most beautiful ornaments of the universe, and from them will be born all who will inhabit the world.

17. "Even as the Lord of Hosts separated the light from the darkness, and the dry land from the waters, so does woman

possess the divine gift of calling forth out of man's evil nature all the good that is in him.

18. "Therefore I say into you, after God, to woman must belong your best thoughts, for she is the divine temple where you will most easily obtain perfect happiness.

19. "Draw from this temple your moral force. There you will forget your sorrows and your failures, and recover the love necessary to aid your fellow-men.

20. "Suffer her not to be humiliated, for by humiliating her you humiliate yourselves, and lose the sentiment of love, without which nothing can exist here on earth.

21. "Protect your wife, that she may protect you—you and all your household. All that you do for your mothers, your wives, for a widow, or for any other woman in distress, you will do for your God."

### CHAPTER XIII

1. Thus Saint Issa taught the people of Israel for three years, in every city and every village, on the highways in the fields, and all he said came to pass.

2. All this time the disguised spies of the Governor Pilate observed him closely, but heard nothing to sustain the accusations formerly made against Issa by the chiefs of the cities.

3. But Saint Issa's growing popularity did not allow Pilate to rest. He feared that Issa would be instrumental in bringing about a resolution culminating in his elevation to the sovereignty, and therefore, ordered the spies to make charges against him.

4. Then soldiers were sent to arrest him, and they cast him into a subterranean dungeon, where he was subjected to all kinds of tortures, to compel him accuse himself, so that he might be

put to death.

5. The Saint, thinking only of the perfect bliss of his brethren, endured all those torments with resignation to the will of the Creator.

6. The servants of Pilate continued to torture him, and he was reduced to a state of extreme weakness; but God was with him and did not permit him to die at their hands.

7. When the principal priests and wise elders learned of the sufferings which their Saint endured, they went to Pilate, begging him to liberate Issa, so that he might attend the great festival which was near at hand.

8. But this the Governor refused. Then they asked him that Issa should be brought before the elder's council, so that he might be condemned, or acquitted, before the festival, and to this Pilate agreed.

9. On the following day the Governor assembled the principal chiefs, priests, elders and judges, for the purpose of judging Issa.

10. The Saint was brought from his prison. They made him sit before the Governor, between two robbers, who were to be judged at the same time with Issa, so as to show the people he was not the only one to be condemned.

11. And Pilate, addressing himself to Issa, said, "Is it true, Oh! Man; that thou incitest the populace against the authorities, with the purpose of thyself becoming King of Israel?"

12. Issa replied, "One does not become king by one's own purpose thereto. They have told you falsehood when you were informed that I was inciting the people to revolution. I have only preached of the King of Heaven, and it was Him whom I told the people to worship.

13. "For the sons of Israel have lost their original innocence

and unless they return to worship the true God they will be sacrificed and their temple will fall in ruins.

14. "The worldly power upholds order in the land; I told them not to forget this. I said to them, 'Live in conformity with your situation and refrain from disturbing public order;' and at the same time, I exhorted them to remember that disorder reigned in their own hearts and spirits.

15. "Therefore, the King of Heaven has punished them, and has destroyed their nationality and taken from them their national kings, 'but,' I added, 'if you will be resigned to your fate, as a reward the Kingdom of Heaven will be yours'."

16. At this moment the witnesses were introduced; one of whom deposed thus: "Thou hast said to the people that in comparison with the power of the king who would soon liberate the Israelites from the yoke of the heathen, the worldly authorities amounted to nothing."

17. "Blessings upon thee!" said Issa, "For thou hast spoken the truth! The King of Heaven is greater and more powerful than the laws of man and His kingdom surpasses the kingdoms of this earth.

18. "And the time is not far off, when Israel, obedient to the will of God, will throw off its yoke of sin; for it has been written that a forerunner would appear to announce the deliverance of the people, and that he would re-unite them in one family."

19. Thereupon the Governor said to the judges: "Have you heard this? The Israelite Issa acknowledges the crime of which he is accused. Judge him, then, according to your laws and pass upon him condemnation to death."

20. "We cannot condemn him," replied the priests and the ancients. "As thou hast heard, he spoke of the King of Heaven,



and he has preached nothing which constitutes insubordination against the law."

21. Thereupon the Governor called a witness who had been bribed by his master, Pilate, to betray Issa, and this man said to Issa: "Is it not true that thou hast represented thyself as a King of Israel, when thou didst say that He who reigns in Heaven sent thee to prepare His people?"

22. But Issa blessed the man and answered: "Thou wilt find mercy, for what thou has said did not come out from thine own heart." Then, turning to the Governor he said: "Why dost thou lower thy dignity and teach thy inferiors to tell falsehood, when, without doing so, it is in thy power to condemn an innocent man?"

23. When Pilate heard his words, he became greatly enraged and ordered that Issa be condemned to death, and that the two robbers should be declared guiltless.

24. The judges, after consulting among themselves, said to Pilate: "We cannot consent to take this great sin upon us,—to condemn an innocent man and liberate malefactors. It would be against our laws."

25. "Act thyself, then, as thou seest fit." Thereupon the priests and elders walked out, and washed their hands in a sacred vessel, and said: "We are innocent of the blood of this righteous man."

## CHAPTER XIV

1. By order of the Governor, the soldiers seized Issa and the two robbers, and led them to the place of execution, where they were nailed upon the crosses erected for them.

2. All day long the bodies of Issa and the two robbers hung

upon the crosses, bleeding, guarded by the soldiers. The people stood all around and the relatives of the executed prayed and wept.

3. When the sun went down, Issa's tortures ended. He lost consciousness and his soul disengaged itself from the body, to reunite with God.

4. Thus ended the terrestrial existence of the reflection of the eternal Spirit under the form of a man who had saved hardened sinners and comforted the afflicted.

5. Meanwhile, Pilate was afraid for what he had done, and ordered the body of the Saint to be given to his relatives, who put it in a tomb near to the place of execution. Crowds of persons came to visit the tomb, and the air was filled with their wailings and lamentations.

6. Three days later, the Governor sent his soldiers to remove Issa's body and bury it in some other place, for he feared a rebellion among the people.

7. The next day, when the people came to the tomb, they found it open and empty, the body of Issa being gone. Thereupon, the rumor spread that the Supreme Judge had sent His angels from Heaven, to remove the mortal remains of the Saint in whom part of the Divine Spirit had lived on earth.

8. When Pilate learned of this rumor, he grew angry and prohibited, under penalty of death, the naming of Issa, or praying for him to the Lord.

9. But the people, nevertheless, continued to weep over Issa's death and to glorify their master; wherefore, many were carried into captivity, subjected to torture and put to death.

10. And the disciples of Saint Issa departed from the land of Israel and went in all directions, to the heathen, preaching that they should abandon their gross errors, think of the salvation

of their souls and earn the perfect bliss which awaits human beings in the immaterial world, full of glory, where the great Creator abides in all his immaculate and perfect majesty.

11. The heathen, the kings, and their warriors, listened to the preachers, abandoned their erroneous beliefs and forsook their priests and idols, to celebrate the praises of the Creator of the Universe, the King of Kings, whose heart is filled with infinite mercy.

## Annex-II

### **PRAYER TUNES OF THE JEWS OF INDIA WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO SHINGLI TUNES (COCHIN) AND THE CANAANITE GROUP OF CHRISTIANS OF KERALA.**

Music and folk songs have played an important role to preserve the history and culture of people.

Studies carried out by several scholars of the ancient prayer tunes heard in Synagogues in Cochin, Bombay and some churches in South India, indicate that these prayer tunes as also other songs can be considered to be over 2000 years old and have elements reaching back to Temple times before the destruction of ancient Israel by the Romans. Some tapes of prayer tunes of the Canaanite and Jacobite group of Christians collected by the author indicates that the melodies show identity to the prayer tunes of the Jews of Cochin and the Bene Israel of India. The Jews in India unlike other parts of the world could succeed in maintaining their ancient traditions and prayer tunes; this is a compliment to the people of India for their tolerance to other religions and their philosophy of live and let live.

Dr. Johanna Spector of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, has carried out research in the music and prayer tunes of the Jews of Cochin. When in the Cochin Synagogue in 1961, she was struck by the softness and clarity of intonation which reminded her of European Sefardic rites. She thought at first that the tunes were influenced by the spanish and Portuguese Jews who came to India after 1492. Her detailed investigation proved this assumption erroneous.



She observed that the Ta'ame Hammiqra (musical graphs) taught in Cochin and the Spanish-Portuguese cantillation differed considerably. Even the direction of the Motifs for Zarqa, Segolta, Pazer Gadol, Telisha Gedola, Telisha qetana, Zaqef qaton, Ma'arikh and Yetib were different. She noticed while comparing the Cochin Ta'amim with the Babylonian from Baghdad, that great similarity was discernible in contour and direction of the motifs. This could have been due to the historical fact that the Babylonian exile forced the Jews to move eastwards to Iran, Afghanistan and in the 5th Century persecutions in Iran under Firuz, Jews were further driven to India.

As to prayer tunes, the so called "Shingli Tunes" are ancient (Shingli tunes take their name from the original place of settlement of Jews in India. Cranganore which was called Muzhiris by the Greeks and Shingli by the Chinese and Jews). The Melodious prayer tunes of Selikhot, Simhat Torah are indetical to both the Jews of Cochin and that of the Bene Israel of Bombay coast.

Prof. P.M. Jussay in his research on Jewish Folk songs observed striking similarities that exist between the Jews of Cochin and the Canaanite Christians. The similarities become significant when the Canaanites claim Jewish origin.

Dr. A.I. Simon a Jew of Cochin published a dozen wedding songs. These were brought to the notice of scholars when he read a paper on these songs at the XXXIX session of Indian History Congress held in 1978 at Hyderabad.

Shirley Isenberg, author of "India's Bene Israel" (1988) had made efforts to collect ancient wedding songs sung by Jewish women of Cochin but found that these have not been written down but transmitted by oral tradition from generation to generation Prof. P.M. Jussay has in his possession about 200 such songs written in the peculiar Malayalam dialect which was current among the Jews. These songs thus collected cover historical, biblical, bridal and other songs. The songs of the Canaanites are similar and almost all begin by invoking the name of the Almighty. Biblical stories which appear common to both Jews and Canaanites is the story of 'Joseph'.

In the Jewish songs Gnayan is commonly said while in the Canaanite songs Nayan is used both meaning God. Further research has shown that there is a list of common words found in the songs of these two communities which it is believed do not occur in any other community whether Christian or pagan.

#### THE KANANAYA CHRISTIANS OF SOUTH INDIA BASED ON AN ARTICLE BY REV. DR. JACOB VELLIYAH.

The earliest foundations of christianity were laid in South India in 52 AD by St. Thomas, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. Jewish settlements were already there much before the arrival of St. Thomas. The Canaanite community of Christians of Kerala settled in the district of Kottayam in Travancore and the southern fringes of Cochin in around 345 AD.

As history goes, Thomas of Cana (or rather Knayel the merchant) came to Kerala in the fourth century for trade purposes. The entourage of Thomas of Cana consisted of 72 families numbering 400 persons in three ships sailed from Mesopotamia to India and it is said that they belonged to the Tribes of Israel. Crangannore was the capital of the Chera King who assigned them land at the mouth of the river Periar.

The Kananaya Christians have several special features in their social life a few of which are common today to other Syrian Christians of India. Their tradition is kept in the ancient songs and the folk dance especially Margham Kali—a male dance which takes place on festive occasions such as weddings, special feasts and community conventions.

The Syrian christians of Malabar take mostly Biblical names like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Their old Testament character is evident also in the blessing given by the Kananaya parents to their children.

Ceremonies related to weddings deserve special attention. Kananaya Christians use a special canopy (huppah) at the wedding celebration at home and the bride and bride-groom are seated under

it. A symbolic sum of money is given to the father of the bride as compensation and maidens are there to accompany the bride.

**PASSOVER:-** The Syrian christians observe the Passover with a special family meal which takes place on Monday and Thursday after night fall. It consists of eating unleavened bread and a special drink called 'milk' and singing of a few hymns which relate to the Creation, the story of Abraham, the Exodus etc.

All the members of the family standing in reverence receive the bread broken by the head of the family. He washes his hands before breaking this paschal bread, according to the custom. The wine which is prepared from coconut milk and certain plum has a light red color and is used specially on this night. The family eat this bread, while dipping the bread in the milk. On Good Friday, before eating anything these christians drink the juice of bitter herb—It is possible that this was once connected with the passover meal.

Dr. Shalva Weil of the Hebrew University was engaged in critically examining the claim of the Canaanite group about their Jewish origin. Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail generally accepts Dr. Shalva's views that the Canaanites are Judeo—Christians but there are many who disagree.

Thomas A Timberg author of "Jews in India" (1986) has carried out scholarly study of the Jews of Cochin together with the Canaanite & Syrian Christians of the South bringing out quite a few common features in their songs & religious practices.

## Annex-III

### TRANSLATION OF PART OF THE DIARY OF MOSSEH PEREIRA DE-PAIVA—1686 AD. AMSTERDAM

The Jewish Community of Amsterdam sent a delegation in 1686 consisting of four Jews to Cochin their leader being MOSSEH PEREIRA DE-PAIVA.

The history of this historic Community of Cochin is contained in this rare document, the translation of part of this historic document is given here.

Moved by brotherly love which was nourished in my heart for a long time, I resolved to proceed to this side. I always truly and earnestly desired to visit our brethren of Cochin. The Lord our God granted me this grace on Thursday the 21st November 1686 when at three in the afternoon we arrived, stopping for one hour in the company of Vosburgo to whose house David Castiel and Joseph Zackay had come as representatives of the congregation to receive and felicitate us on our arrival, doing it with such demonstrations of joy our presence had evoked. This manifestation of welcome brought from us and others tears and we recited with them the verse of the Royal Psalmist; "This is the day the Lord had appointed. Let us rejoice and be glad" We embarked together a vessel which the commandant got ready for us to go to high Cochin, which is half a league from low Cochin. There David Levy, the Mudaliar (Mudaliar denotes a captain who carries a rod with a head of gold and on it is the coat of arms of the Company) came to receive us and gave a grand reception. He took us to his house where we found the entire congregation gathered with great joy to wish us. If I try to explain, I would deem myself ungrateful



to them for their affection for it is certain that they were not tired of seeing us, embracing us and thanking God for having shown such good fortune.

On the following day which was the 22nd of November, Haham Belilia visited us with the same show of affection. Belilia is a scholar and a learned man. Their joy was so great and generous that I positively affirm to you my brethren, that if the King Messiah had come to them through the door, I do not know if they could have shown greater affection. For my part I assure you that, I felt very much indebted to them because my soul was equally happy as theirs.

On 23rd Sabbath night we went for the first time to the Synagogue where they expressed openly their joy by singing different hymns in thanksgiving to God for having shown them their brethren from such remote countries whom they were longing to see for years.

On the morning of the 24th they entertained us with music consisting of 6 drums, 6 trumpets and 6 brass instruments the harmony of which was pleasant; but even more enjoyable was the splendid lunch which David Raby gave us with such magnanimity that you, respected, Sir, will have nothing to match its excellence, when God grants me the grace to return to that country.

On the morning of the 25th November I went to the city to thank the commandant for the kind treatment shown to our people and to beg of him that he be pleased to continue it. In the evening we went to Anguicaymal on the other side of the river. All this place is of Malabar Jews who have there two synagogues. In the middle of the river we met a boat which came to welcome us with many instrumental music and escorted us to the shore. We got down among a big concourse of people who had come to welcome us. They led us in procession along a very long street with songs and I shed tears of joy. Before reaching the Synagogue at a place two hundred feet distant, Senhores Hakhamim came to receive us. These hakhamim (Rabbis) know sufficiently the law to solve ordinary cases. The hakhamim and hazan (minister) conducted us to the synagogue accompanied by a multitude

of people in whose company we recited "minha" (afternoon service). We then ascended a gallery in the azara (entrance lobby of Synagogue) where we found a table laid out with food and drinks that their means afforded. After two hours at the table, they led us to the other Synagogue through illuminated streets with music. Here we recited "arbit" (evening service). After the service we proceeded to the jetty where we found all the people gathered. We took leave of them but some accompanied us to our house and afterwards returned to their houses fully satisfied.

On the 26th, Elia and David Castiel entertained us at a dinner as lavish as the one given by Raby. The same was repeated by Juda and David Askquanazim. We were detained by them till three in the afternoon. We then embarked in two boats for the city accompanied by hakhamim who had brought two other boats. We proceeded to the city with music and chanting of psalms and hymns. From here we went to the commandant's house to the accompaniment of music but without singing of psalms and hymns. The commandant received us courteously and conversed with the congregation for one hour in the course of which I thanked him for his kindness and assured him of their gratitude. As my short speech ended, the hakham came forward to bless me with such affection that the commandant, all present and I wept. We then took leave of him and they went home very sad. We remained in the commandant's house equally sad. On the following morning at our departure 8 or 10 of the leaders all full of sorrow, came and remained till we weighed anchor. The hakhamim, the leaders and also some persons from the other side brought with them choicest gifts and I did not know how to express my gratitude to them. I was very touched with their tears and sighs our imminent departure had caused. I was also affected by the love and kindness they bestowed on us and for their continuous receptions in gala dresses in spite of many who were in mourning for their recently deceased parents and brothers.

## Annex-IV

### **QUR'AN AND BANI ISRAEL**

The oldest-Synagogue in Bombay—Shaar Ha—Rahamim was built in 1796 by Captain Samuel Divekar who was taken prisoner by Tippu Sultan of Hyderabad and condemned to be beheaded along with other British prisoners. He was saved through the intervention of Tippu's mother who had read so much about the Bani Israel in the Holy Qur'an and was pleased to see face to face a Bani Israel.

A few verses from the Holy Qur'an are given here to indicate the close affinity of Islam and Judaism.

#### **SECTION 5- Page 17**

40. O children of Israel! call to mind my favours which I bestowed upon you, and fulfil your covenant with me as I fulfil my covenant with you and fear none but Me alone.

#### **SECTION 6- Page 18**

47. O children of Israel! call to mind My favour (prophetship) which I bestowed upon you, and that I conferred upon you My blessings in the world.
48. And guard yourselves against a Day when one soul shall not avail another neither shall intercession on its behalf be accepted, nor shall any compensation be taken from it, nor shall they be helped.
49. And (remember) when We rescued you from the people of Pharaoh, who subjected you to severe chastisement, slaughtered your sons & permitted only your females to live, and in this was a great trial from your Lord.

50. And remember when We parted the river for you and We saved you & drowned Pharaoh's people while you watched on.
54. And remember when Moses said to his people: "Oh my people! You have indeed been unjust to your own souls by taking the calf for worship, therefore turn to your Creator in repentance and now fight with your own souls to such an extent that you do not live for your own selves, but sacrifice yourselves only for the great cause of God, that will bring good to you from your Creator; He turned to you in forgiveness, for He is then Oft-returning, Most Merciful."

The Holy Qur'an further narrates One hundred and eleven verses (Part 12-Pages 20 to 41) relating to Joseph (son of Jacob) and his eleven brothers.

## Chapter XII (12)

(12 sections; III verses)

### SECTION I—Joseph's vision.

*In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1. A.L.R. These are the verses of the Luminous Book (which brings everything into light).

2. Surely We have revealed it an Arabic Quran—in order that you may understand.

3. We narrate to you the right and best of the narratives (which have been proclaimed about Joseph) by this Quran which We are revealing to you, though before this you were certainly of the unaware ones.

4. When Joseph said to his father: "O my father! surely I saw eleven stars and the sun and the moon—I saw them prostrating themselves before me."

5. He said: "O my dear little son! relate not your vision to your brothers, lest they conspire against you, surely the satan (the evil insurgent one) is a manifest foe to a good man.

6. "And thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of parables (and visions) and complete His favours on you



and the off spring of Jacob, as He completed it on your fathers Abraham and Isaac; your Lord is the Possessor of great Knowledge and Wisdom.”

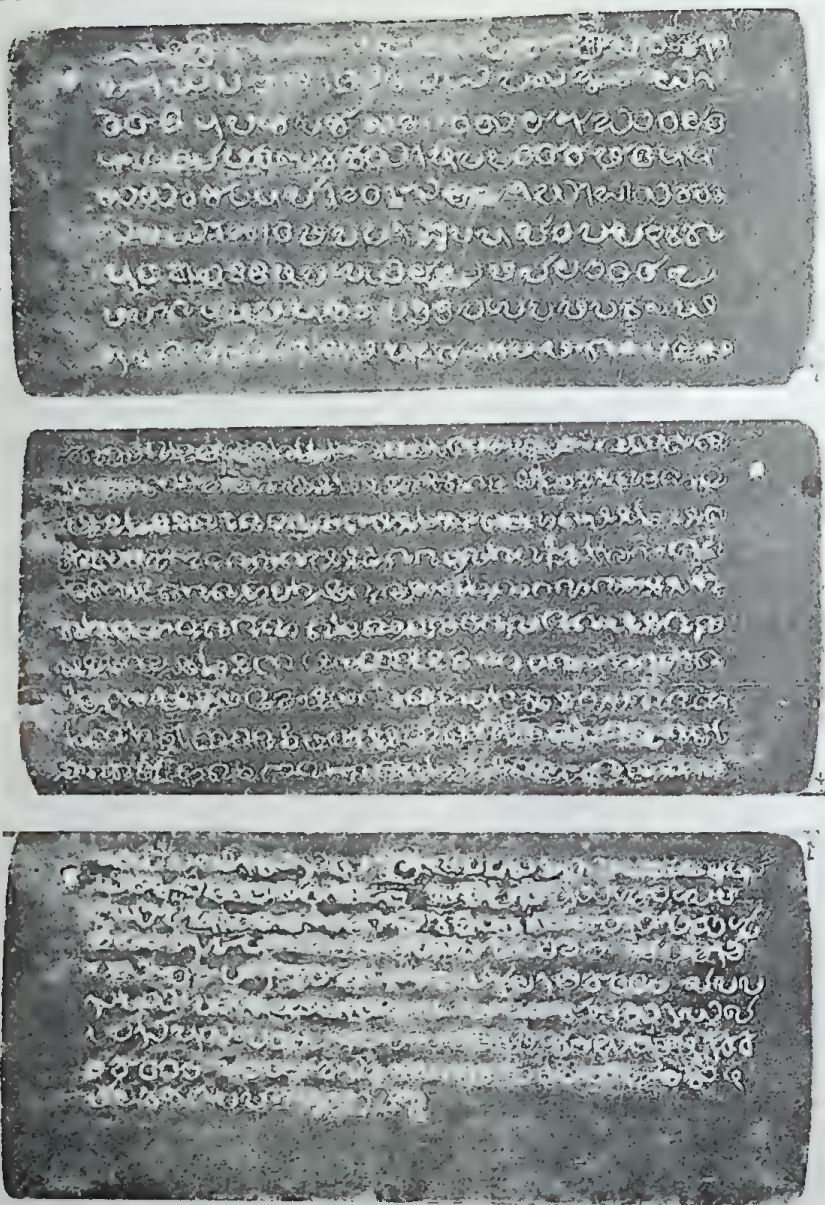
#### SECTION 2—Plot against Joseph

7. Certainly in the narration of Joseph and his brothers are signs for the inquirers.

8. When they (the step-brothers of Joseph) said: “Truly Joseph and his brother are dearer to our father than we, though we are a quite good body; really our father is in manifest error.

9. Slay Joseph or expel him to some other country, then the whole attention and the love of your father may be for you alone, and after that you should take the Path of righteous people.

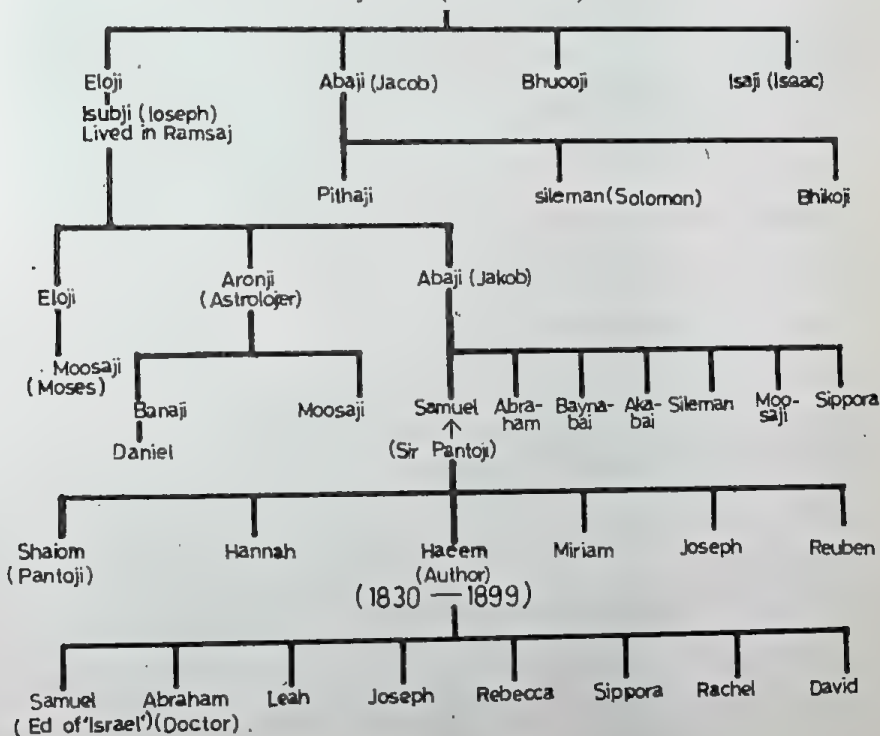
10. One from among them said: Slay not Joseph but cast him down into the bottom of the dark, dingy well, some travellers of any caravan may pick him up and take him with them, if you must do something (so do only this much).



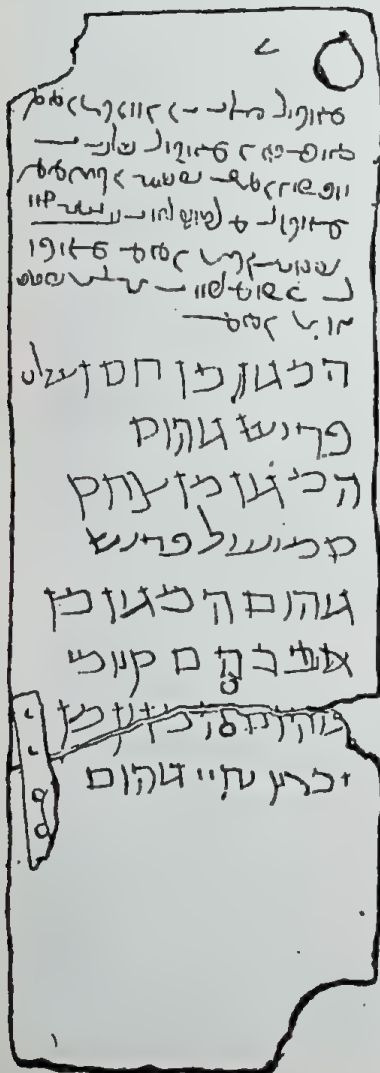
Three copper plates presented to Joseph Rabban.

# GENEALOGY OF THE AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF THE BENE-ISRAEL OF INDIA

Aronji-Aaron (lived at Kehim)



# HEBREW SIGNATURES ON COPPER PLATES - COCHIN.



An ancient document granting land etc. to Christians of Malabar by King Gheraman Perumal 1615 AD.

The fifth of the existing Quilon Copper plates contains the names of witnesses, four of which are in Hebrew script.

The Hebrew letters are badly cut, evidently the engraver was totally ignorant of the script and there are several mistakes.

1. HMGN MN HSNLY Hereby I, HASAN ALI
2. PDYS GHYM to it am witness.
3. HMGN MN YSKH Hereby I, ISAAC
4. BN MYK'L PDYS been Michael to it
5. GHYM HMGNMN am witness. Hereby I,
6. 'BRHM BN\* \* \* ABRAHAM been\* \*
7. GHYM HMGNMN am witness. Hereby I,
8. Y\* \* \* GHYM Y\* \* \* am witness.





BRASS LAMP

This was designed for Jews specially for the Day of Atonement Service, as the oil in the lamp will be sufficient for burning for more than 24 hours.



COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

בנה בנינו בית זבל לך מכוון לשב  
עולמים שנת נדול יהיה כבוד הבית  
הזה האחרון מן הראשון ליצידה היום  
בשלישי בשבת חמשה לכוסלו ב'ה'

Mural slab of the Cochangadi Synagogue built in 1344 now preserved in the courtyard of the Cochin Synagogue.



R  
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B  
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L



मागपयेव च ॥ कोशल्यं च तथा ज्ञेयं तेषां राजा पृथक्पृथक् ॥ १३ ॥ नानाभाषाः स्थितास्तत्र बहुधर्मप्रवर्तकाः ॥ एवम्वदशतं ज्ञानं नतम्न वै  
 शकादयः ॥ १४ ॥ श्रुत्वा धर्मविनाशं च बहुदुःखं समन्विताः ॥ केचित्तीर्त्वा सिन्धुनदीमार्ग्यदेशं समागताः ॥ १५ ॥ हिमपर्वतमार्गेण भिमुभागेण  
 चागमन् ॥ जित्वाद्याहोडयित्वा तान्स्वदेशं पुनराययुः ॥ १६ ॥ एतद्वा योनिस्तत्परां परं हर्षमुपाययुः ॥ एतस्मिन्नन्ते तत्र शलिव्याहः प्रपन्नः  
 ॥ १७ ॥ विक्रमादित्यप्राञ्च पितृगज्यं गृहीतवान् ॥ जित्वा शकादुरगधर्षानन्तर्त्तितदिशजाव ॥ १८ ॥ वाहाकांकारूपपाशं रामजान्धुरा  
 च्छठाव ॥ तेषां कोशागृहीत्वा च दंडयोग्यानकारयत् ॥ १९ ॥ स्थापिता तेन मर्यादां स्लेच्छुर्योणां पृथक्पृथक् ॥ सिन्धुस्थानमिति ज्ञेयं गच्छे  
 मायस्य चात्तमम् ॥ २० ॥ स्लेच्छस्थानं परं सिन्धोः कृतं तेन महात्मना ॥ एकदा तु शकार्यशो हिमगुणं समाययो ॥ २१ ॥ हृणदंशस्य मय्ये  
 व निमित्त्य पुरुषं शुभम् ॥ ददंशं तलवात्राजा गंगामं भवत्सकम् ॥ २२ ॥ का भवानिति तं प्राह स होवाच सुदान्वितः ॥ ईशपुत्रं च मो  
 विदि कुमारीभयम् ॥ २३ ॥ स्लेच्छुर्यमस्य वक्तां सत्यवतपराणम् ॥ इति श्रुत्वा हृषः प्राह यतः ॥ २४ ॥ श्रुत्वा  
 वाचं महागजं प्राप्तं मत्स्यस्य संशयं ॥ निर्मयादि स्लेच्छदंशं ममाहोदं समागतः ॥ २५ ॥ इशामसी च दम्युनां प्रादुर्भूता भयंकरा ॥ नामदे  
 स्लेच्छनः प्राप्य ममाहवतपरागतः ॥ २६ ॥ स्लेच्छुः स्थापितो यमो मया तच्छृणु श्रूते ॥ मानसं निर्मलं कृत्वा मलं हरेद्वाभावाभम् ॥ २७ ॥  
 नेगमं जपमन्थाय जपेत् निर्मलं परम् ॥ न्यायेत मयवचसा मनोभयं मनवानः ॥ २८ ॥ ध्यानेन पूजयेद्दीशं मय्यमडलमन्वितम् ॥  
 अचलोऽयं प्रभुः मातात्मना मय्योचलः मदा ॥ २९ ॥ तत्त्वानां चलभूतानां कर्षणः स ममन्तः ॥ इति कृत्येन प्रपालं ममाहा विल्लं  
 गता ॥ ३० ॥ ईशमूर्तिर्द्विदि प्राप्ता नित्यशुद्धा शिवंकरा ॥ इशामसीह इति च मम नाम प्रतिष्ठिताम् ॥ ३१ ॥ इति श्रुत्वा स भूपालो  
 नत्वा तं स्लेच्छपूजकम् ॥ स्थापयामास तं तत्र स्लेच्छस्थाने हि दारुण ॥ ३२ ॥ स्वराज्यं प्राप्तवान्जा हयमेधमर्चकम् ॥ राज्यं  
 कृत्वा स पृथक्च स्वग्लोकमुपाययो ॥ ३३ ॥ स्वर्गते श्रूतेरां तस्मिन्त्यथा चामीत्यथा शृणु ॥ ३४ ॥ इति श्रीभविष्य महापुराणे प्र  
 मर्गपर्वणि चतुर्थोऽध्यायः ॥ ३५ ॥ शलिव्याहनकालं द्वितीयोऽध्यायः ॥ ३६ ॥ ॥ श्रीमते उवाच ॥ ॥ शलिव्या  
 हनवर्गे च गजानां दश चाभवत् ॥ राज्यं पंचशताब्दं च कृत्वा लोकांन्तर् ययुः ॥ १ ॥ मर्यादां कृत्यते रीना जाता भूमंडले तत्र ॥ भूयति  
 देशयो यो वै भोजगज इति स्मृतः ॥ दृष्ट्वा प्रक्षीणमय्यादां वली दिग्विजयं यया ॥ २ ॥ सेनया दशसाहरण्यं कालिदांसिनं संयुतः ॥ तयायै  
 ब्राह्मणः माद्रे मिथुनायमुपाययो ॥ ३ ॥ जित्वा गाथागजान्स्लेच्छान्काशमरात्रागवाच्छठाव ॥ तेषां प्राप्य भहाकोशं दंडयोग्यानकारयत् ॥ ४ ॥  
 एतस्मिन्नन्तरं स्लेच्छ आचार्येण समन्वितः ॥ महामद इति ख्यातः शिष्यशावांसमन्वितः ॥ ५ ॥ यूपधेव महादेवं मरुथलनिवासिनम् ॥  
 गंगाजलेऽथ मन्थाय पंचगव्यसमन्वितः ॥ चंदनादिभिरप्यर्च्यं तुष्टाव मनसा हरम् ॥ ६ ॥ भोजराज उवाच ॥ ॥ तस्मै निमित्तं तस्य  
 मरुथलनिवासिने ॥ त्रिपुरासुनराशाय बहुमायाप्रवर्तिने ॥ ७ ॥ स्लेच्छुर्भाय शुद्धाय सिद्धिदानन्दरूपिणे ॥ त्वं मां हि विक्रं विदि शरणार्थं  
 सुपातय ॥ ८ ॥ ॥ मृत उवाच ॥ ॥ इति श्रुत्वा स्तब्धः देवः शब्दमाह नृपाय तप ॥ गंतव्यं भोगराजेन महाकालेश्वरस्थले ॥ ९ ॥  
 स्लेच्छुस्सुदृष्टिना भूमिवाहीका नाम विभुता ॥ आर्यधर्मो हि नैवाव वाहीके देशदारणे ॥ १० ॥ वयुवाज महाभारी योऽसौ दग्धो मया पुरा ॥  
 निमुने बालदेव्येन प्रेषितः पुनरागतः ॥ ११ ॥ अर्थोऽयः स वरो मतोः प्राप्तवान्देव्यवर्द्धनः ॥ महामद इति ख्यातः पेशाचकृतितत्परः ॥ १२ ॥



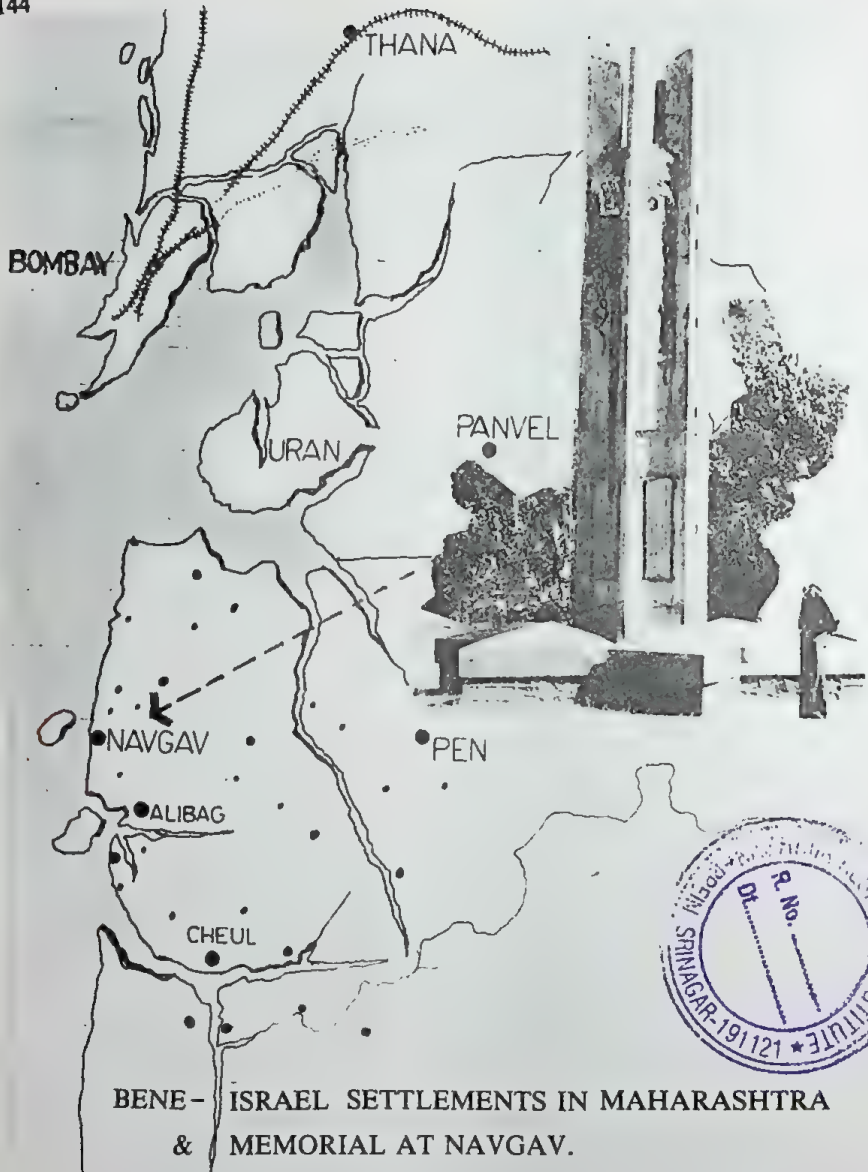


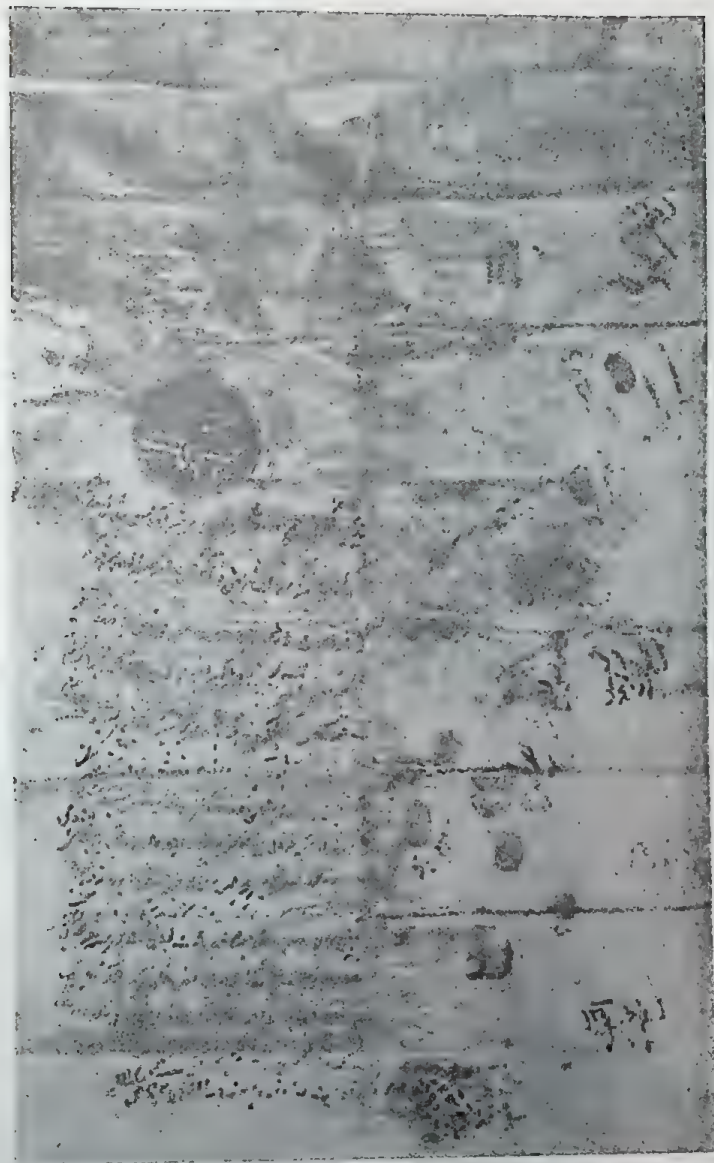
Swami Abhedananda



Nicholas Notovitch

Encyclopaedia Judaica, catalogue general De La Librairie Francaise  
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Letter of Authority in favour of Rehman Khan Mir—The custodian of  
Rozabal



Raja Sangliana of Sakawrdai Village  
Mizoram-India.



Mir Alam Naqashbandi-Lost Tribe of Israel in Gandarbal-Srinagar.



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